



E D W Y:

A N

HISTORIC TALE.



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E · D · W · Y;

SON OF

ETHELRED THE SECOND:

AN HISTORIC TALE.

BY A LADY.

ADDRESSED (BY PERMISSION)

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE
COUNTESS of WESTMORLAND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

D U B L I N :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHORESS;

BY JOHN RICE, COLLEGE-GREEN:

And Sold by

G. G. J. & G. ROBINSON, PATER-NOSTER-ROW,
LONDON.

1791.

1944-3-13-8

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(2 vols)

BY A LADY

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE
COUNTESS OF MONTMAGNY

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The Countess of Westmorland;

THIS LITTLE TALE,

IS HUMBLY ADDRESSED;

BY HER LADYSHIP'S,

MOST OBEDIENT

HUMBLE SERVANT,

Dublin, August
1794

THE AUTHORESS.

A D D R E S S
T O T H E
C O U N T E S S O F W E S T M O R L A N D.

A C C E P T this trifling gift—let it prevail,
Nor, at your gracious hands indulgence fail ;
May it, (as I have done) acceptance find—
May it amuse, yet melt thy generous mind :

May'st THOU but read it with a partial eye,
Too good, too great, its num'rous faults to spy :
For piteous tales oft gain the gentle ear,
When human woes in simplest garb appear :
And in this true, and ancient Tale you'll find,
Sufferings beyond the lot of human kind :
And pity sure must have a double claim,
When those born great, oft suffer in th' extreme ;
If royal woes can draw a common tear,
Exalted rank must feel them still more near :

For you the muse attempts these humble lays—
If you accept—she seeks no other praise.

P R E F A C E.

THE Authorefs of the following Tale, has little to say either to recommend it to the notice of the Public, or in excuse for the faults she verily believes may be found in it.

The incidents that compose it are taken from the earlier reigns of some of our ancient kings; historic truth has been strictly adhered to; and the extracts taken from Rapin's and Henry's Histories of England.

The Authorefs has abridged or amplified circumstances, as she found them more or less interesting; and little fiction, except to enliven the tediousness of mere history, will be found.

Her Hero is a perfect blank, and has little to do with the story, except sometimes to be the sad relater of it, till the last book; yet all historians agree, that EDWY, Son of ÆTHELRED the Second, did exist; and was, by the ill conduct and misfortunes of that monarch, left destitute; was banished by CANUTE, and lived and died unnoticed and unknown; being only distinguished by the title of King of the Beggars, which he acquired by his misfortunes.

Pity for the oppressed and the neglected, made the Authorefs chuse him for the hero of her little tale; in which, so many centuries after his death, his name is revived; though during his life, it was little known.

Should the Public be good-natured enough to assist in reviving the memory of a man, who

P R E F A C E.

perhaps had merit, though eclipsed by obscurity and repressed by misfortune; the Authoreſs in return, hopes that her readers may receive as much amuſement from it, as ſuch a triſtle can afford; Fame, ſhe knows ſhe has no pretenſions to; ſhe is rather in dread of cenſure, therefore, wiſely conceals her name,—for “ Critics make a coward of her” but, ſecure in her obſcurity, ſhe ventures her EDWY into the world, in the hope of his ſucceeding better in the 18th, than he did in the 10th century.

She begs to treſpaſs a few minutes longer on her reader's patience, to repeat the words of an elegant author, who juſtly ſays,—“ That tho' few are engaged in ſuch ſcenes, as give them the opportunity to grow wiſe by the downfall of kings, or the defeat of warriors; yet, to know how the firſt people acted, under different circumſtances. how they bore, avoided, or provoked calamity, or acted in proſperity, is, at leaſt entertaining, if not uſeful; and to take a view of ancient manners and cuſtoms, as practiced many centuries ago, is at leaſt curious.”

The Authoreſs has endeavoured to make her Hero ſpeak and act conformable to the manners of the age in which he lived; and throughout the tale, ſhe has endeavoured to depict manners as they were at that remote period.

But enough of Preface—and ſhould any think there is too much, let it be attributed to a conſciouſneſs how much this attempt ſtands in need of apology; The Authoreſs concludes then with entreating her readers to make allowances for the inaccuracies of a female pen.

E D W Y:

AN HISTORIC TALE.

B O O K I.

ON a gloomy day, towards the end of the autumnal equinox, when lowering clouds had obscured the sun; a pilgrim, with slow and unsteady steps, less from fatigue than sorrow and heaviness of heart—as he crossed a wide extended plain, was met by a troop of young knights, in the gay garb of war:—they passed without heeding him, and would have been as little noticed by the pilgrim, had not his attention been roused by hearing one of them say, in the Saxon tongue, “this is no day for our sport, let us postpone it to a brighter, when the sun may gild with its beams, the arms of the victor:” “agreed,” said another of the knights, whose fair and blooming complexion and blue sparkling eyes, declared him no native of France.—“This gloomy day portends rather as if our sportive fight, would end in enmity and blood.”

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The pilgrim, starting, viewed earnestly two of this little troop, as they passed him, and the words, "my brothers!" burst from his lips; he turned, and gazing after them, until they were hid from his sight, by a thick wood that bounded the plain on one side, as a chain of high hills did on the other.

When he could see them no longer, he threw himself on the ground, and again repeating, "my brothers---surely it was they! but an exiled wretch like me, was not deemed worth their notice; or, perhaps, disguised by this habit, they knew me not."

The pilgrim remained some moments silent, while the deserted and gloomy appearance of surrounding objects, and the black and lowering sky, increased the weight on his spirits, and the sorrow that oppressed him: a cold damp wind blew from the hills, and the distant forest groaned to the blast, which drove the withered leaves along the plain---every thing wore a look of desolation.

The pilgrim started up as if affrighted, and turning towards the forest, which had hid the little troop from his sight;—"If I can recover their view, though at a distance," said he, "they may guide me to a place inhabited, where I may find shelter from the coming storm." He then moved forward, but intent on the ill-fortune that every where attended him, he walked heedlessly on, nor raised his eyes, till he found himself entangled among

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the hills, which lay to the right, and knew not how to get free from them.

Had his mind been more at ease, the wild variegated beauty of the surrounding scene might have charmed him; but he was too sad to taste such delights; and, finding himself faint, and exhausted by fatigue and fasting: he stopped to refresh himself by a draught of water from a clear stream, which ran through the dell in which he was wandering, and of which he saw no termination: overcome by fatigue, he threw himself on the ground, under the shelter of a rock; and sleep, though it generally flies the wretched, soon closed his eyes,

But it did not shut out those thoughts that tormented him waking, they continued to harass him during his unquiet slumber: after tossing some time from side to side, he started up unrefreshed, tho', by the encreasing gloom, he found he had slept some time.

The clouds now wore a terrible appearance, and threatened a thunder-storm. He cast his eyes on all sides—the plain he had past—the gloomy forest—the surrounding hills, and a wide and desolate view of the sea, which, from the height he had climbed, he beheld dashing against the rocky shore below, were the only objects which presented themselves to the eyes of the forlorn pilgrim.

Looking towards the ocean he perceived the sky begin to brighten; and though each moment of remaining light was precious, as his hopes

hopes of getting free of the labyrinth he was in, depended on it, he stood intently viewing that bright spot, till the sun, just going to set, shewed for a moment its last beams, then, sinking from his sight, his hope of getting free of the place he was in, sunk with it. "What will now betide thee?" he said, descending the hill: the rock, under whose shelter he had slept, was in view, he bent his steps towards it, and casting himself on the same spot he had so lately pressed, he exclaimed, in a voice interrupted by grief, "why was I sent into a world, as if merely to stand exposed to the evils of it, or as if I alone of all my *father's* house, was fated to have his errors visited on my head?—Why, oh heaven! since it was thy pleasure to bestow existence on me, was I cursed with a spirit to feel my sordid fate? why was I not born son to the labouring hind? Then, contented, I had toiled for bread, and blessed thee!"

"Stop thy presumptuous complaining, nor arraign Providence!" cried a hollow voice, which seemed to come from the rock:—affrighted, and uncertain whether the sounds were human, the pilgrim started, and raising himself on one knee, he clasped his staff in his trembling hands, unable to get on his feet:—a rustling on one side, made him turn his eyes that way, he saw a tall figure, in a dark-coloured, flowing habit, advance with slow steps, his feet clad in sandals; a leathern girdle

He fastened the garment around him, from which depended a large rosary; his snowey beard reached his bosom, and his head was covered by a cap of the same stuff as his garment; a staff supported his steps.

The figure advanced towards the pilgrim, in whose countenance pale affright was depicted; it stopped, and each regarding the other a moment in silence: the stranger in a mild tone of pity, said, "Who art thou my son? and what causes thy so bitter complaints? art thou oppressed by men? or hast thou offended heaven? or seekest thou a refuge amidst those unfrequented wilds? If thou dost, I offer thee one, and the threatening inclemency of the coming night demands speedy shelter; arise then, and follow me, already the thunder rolls at a distance, soon will it burst over our heads; let us hasten from its fury.

The pilgrim, assured by these words, and the tone of pity in which they were spoken, (for a little will comfort or depress the afflicted;) arose, and followed his conductor, who, as hastily as his age, and the winding way would permit, led him on through the mazes of the hills, to a shaded dingle, terminated by a high rock; as they drew near, the pilgrim saw it was not all natural stone, but a rude rustic building raised against it, and made to look of a piece with itself; covered by the ivy, eglantine, woodbine, and myrtle,
that

that twined about its craggy points; while every fragrant and aromatic shrub grew around, watered by a rill that murmured through them.

An entrance opened by a latch admitted them, and the hermit invited his guest, in such civil guise, as shewed he had not spent all his days in those solitary wilds; to repose himself on a seat made soft by rushes, while he renewed the fire, and provided a repast for his refreshment: some excellent fish, bread, fruits, dried and fresh, from a garden cultivated by himself, were soon set on the board, and a little flaggon of wine, crowned the repast.

When the pilgrim had recruited his exhausted spirits by refreshment, and felt himself cheered by a blazing fire, and above all, by the benevolent countenance of the hermit, he found words; (for hitherto, he had in silent dejection, or, with courteous gestures only, received the kindness of his entertainer) to render thanks to heaven, and to his generous host; to whom he said, "How ought I to blush before thee for the rash and desponding words, thou didst hear me utter! thyself so resigned to heaven,—so content with thy fate; and who, if I may judge from thy demeanour, have not passed thy former days in those wilds: but, dare I confess before thee, that delusive hope, lying to me from day to day, has long been banished my breast." "My son,"

son interrupted the hermit, whatsoever have been thy afflictions, thou standest not alone in calamity—heaven oft tries us with the latter, to wean us from a world we should be too much attached to, were our paths strewed with roses only.

“ But, were I acquainted with the events of thy life, I might, perhaps, be able to afford thee comfort or advice; and to encourage thy confidence, I will inform thee why I made choice of this solitude to end my days in. My story may serve at least to divert thy mind from the recollection of its sorrows.”

The pilgrim thanked him, and promised to have no reserve with one who so kindly interested himself in his behalf, and in silence attended the discourse of the hermit, who thus began his tale.

“ You see before you, my son, one born to rank, to honours, and to riches, which yet could not secure me happiness.” And of these perhaps, thou dost repine the loss; but, attend to my life, and it will shew thee how little real satisfaction is derived merely from their possession. My father was a Count of *Provence*; by a first marriage he had one son—and by a second, him whom you see before you, and a daughter named *Josepha*; after her mother, who died in giving her birth; her last words, entreated his tender care of her infants; she expressed no fear of his first-born; but the Count too well acquainted with the dispo-

sition of his son; determined, should death deprive us of him also, to leave us little in his power. Some months before the death of the Countess, he had sent him to the court of his Sovereign; in the hope that the society of the young nobility; and the manners of a court, would correct his fierce and untractable spirit; he had tried to train him in the paths of honour, and virtue; but nature had implanted in his heart, the seeds of pride, avarice, and cruelty, which all a father's fond partiality could not blind him to;—and to remove him far from any who might flatter or confirm his vices, made him continue him at court; where, dazzled by its splendid pleasures; the young Count soon lost all relish for the sports and companions of his boyish days; his manners became gentler, his natural ferocity diminished; but the bad heart remained.”

“ Fourteen years passed on, in happiness and tranquillity, at the castle of my father; whose chief attention was engrossed by mine and his daughter's, education. When death suddenly called him from us; a few hours were however lent him to name those parts of his ample domains, which he intended as mine, and my sister's inheritance; giving his will to the care of an abbot, who attended him in his last moments, and recommending us to the care and affection of his elder son, to whom

whom devolved his honours, and the rest of his large possessions."

"The Count hastened to the castle on the first news of his father's death; his visits were wont to be short and unfrequent, and we were almost strangers to him;—when hearts are estranged by absence or opposing interests;—union or friendship, is rarely found amongst the nearest kindred: nor did our brother's behaviour tend to invite our confidence. On the first days of his arrival his treatment wore that stiff, and haughty air, so proper to keep us at a distance: nor did he conceal his dissatisfaction, at the large fortune that devolved to *Josepha* and me by the will of our father, whose remains were scarcely laid in the tomb, e'er the Count prepared to leave the castle; having first placed *Josepha* in a convent, to complete, as he said, her education; and ordered me to accompany him to the court, in order to present me to the Prince, who was then fitting out a fleet against the *Saracen* rovers, who made frequent descents on his coasts. In this fleet it was determined that I should embark, in company with many of our youth, who embraced this occasion, of giving proofs of their courage, in defence of their country."

"Impatient to see the world, I prepared to obey with pleasure. I will not trouble thee, my, son with the wonder and delight, which the novel, active, and splendid scenes on which

I now entered, inspired me, but hasten to those incidents that at once determined me for ever, to quit society e'er I had scarcely entered it."

"The Count had with a few others of the court, in the sultry season, went out in a small pleasure barge, when they were surprised by a Corsair, and made prisoners. Three of them, preferring death to slavery, leaped into the sea, one only came safe to shore, who reported the fate of the rest, and that the Count my brother, and the young Count of Poitiers, were those who had with himself braved the dangers of the deep, to escape the pirate: the body of a man was cast on shore some days after; but it was not that of my brother, yet all deemed him lost;—for myself, I felt more concern at his death, than his unbrotherly conduct merited. After this, with the permission of my Sovereign, I hastened to Provence, as the care of my sister now devolved solely on me; nor did I deem the castle, under a brother's eye, an improper abode for her; where with her maiden companions, the daughters of our vassals, she past her time in amusements suited to her age; in acquiring accomplishments befitting her sex;—and, above all, in acts of benevolence and devotion; sometimes attended by the knights of my train, we partook of the sports of the field. As Provence has ever been famed for its poetry, the skill of its Troubadours,

dours, or Minstrells, and the loves of Petrarch and Laura. The castle was open to the Minstrells, and to all who excelled in the sciences:—in those contests for fame, the palm of victory, and the reward of merit, was conferred by the hands of *Josepha*, and her young companions. Thus passed in calm and tranquil pleasures our days; and our friends, and vassals shared them with us:—nor were my gates ever shut to the travelling stranger, or the poor.”

“ Amongst the daughters of our neighbouring Barons, there was one of great beauty, and though I had seen her spread her nets to catch my brother; I no sooner became master of his domains, than she bent her cares to please me, and soon succeeded; for my young and too susceptible heart, was not proof against the charms of beauty.

I found no obstacle from her father to my frequent visits; whenever I appeared, his countenance beamed a welcome, and the feast of gladness was spread in his hall. One evening I accompanied the fair *Adelaide* in a walk through a grove that divided her residence from mine; we stood for some time viewing the fading clouds, and the evening saddening into night. Never had *Adelaide* treated me with more kindness, nor ever before did I feel such regret at parting; at last we separated, and she returned home with her attendants. When I reached the castle, I was surprised to

see all the domestics in hurry and confusion; I enquired the cause,—but judge of my astonishment, when informed that my brother, whom, for those three years, all *France* had supposed dead, was returned, accompanied by two strangers.

“Alas!” continued the old domestic;—“Soon will he change our golden days, and make us regret his return: he comes to rule us with a rod of iron;”—I interrupted him,—“My brother alive, and returned!—how!—where is he?”—and without staying to hear more, ran to the great hall, where I found the Count, with a few of his vassals, two of the neighbouring Barons, on whom he had called, and two strangers; one, of dignified and noble demeanour, whilst the appearance and deportment of the latter indicated, as the event verified him, a supple and designing flatterer.”

“On my entrance all arose, but regarding only my brother, I hastened to embrace him; my reception was so cold, as chilled my blood, and covered me with confusion.

“To my questions about his return, he gave such concise answers, as increased my uneasiness, and damped the pleasure his return gave me: for, as the possessions left me by our father were sufficient for me, I felt no regret at restoring those to my brother.”

“One of the strangers with more courteous demeanour than that of the surly Count, answered my enquiries, in terms announcing a man of politeness and worth.

“Your

"Your brother," said the stranger, "with myself and many others, were carried to a port of *Barbary*; where the Corsairs sold us as slaves."—"It was supposed here," said I, interrupting him, "that most of those taken by the Corsairs, had perished in the sea, and none of any note, escaped."—"Yes, yes," said the Count; "who had affected not to hear my questions on this head,—“Those, whose interest it was to wish our deaths, were well inclined to believe us dead.”—"The belief," replied I, "was general."—"Yes! my young sir," said the Count emphatically, "but as any escaped, it was your part to inquire if your brother was amongst them, to find him out, and redeem him with some of his own possessions; but you did better—you made them your own, and he is most unluckily returned to disturb you, and resume his rights."—To this stinging charge, so plausible, yet so false, I was about to answer, but he turned indignantly away, as averse to hear my justification; and the courteous stranger, fearing what I seemed so eager to say, might irritate rather than soften my brother; went on to acquaint me, that "being confined after their daily work, in a deserted building, which lay near the sea, they found means one night to enlarge a small window, left open to admit air, wide enough to get through it; and easily ridding themselves of their fetters, which was only a log, fastened to one leg; they found means to
surprise

surprize a small barque that lay at anchor near the shore; and with little difficulty obliged three men, left to take care of the barque, to hoist sail, and put to sea;—a fair wind, before morning, had carried them far from the *Barbary* shore. After suffering much, they at length made the island of *Sicity*, from whence they soon found their way to *France*.”

“ Our companions,” continued the stranger, “ being of different countries, seperated from us, except that youth, (who is of your nation) and myself, whom the Count prevailed on to accompany him home, and see him reinstated in his hereditary possessions: as we were slavers in his captivity and escape.”—“ And much it joys me,” said I, “ that you see the Count restored sole master here; was I the only one that gave entire belief to the report that all who fell into the Corsairs hands had perished, except a few of no note, I should, instead of happiness and joy, have cause to feel remorse and confusion at my brother’s return:” as I said this, the Count entered the hall, having withdrawn whilst the stranger, whose name was *Albany*, related the particulars of their captivity and escape: this man, who saw the gloom on my brother’s brow still lowering on me, prevented its bursting out for that night, by keeping up a general conversation, during the banquet which was soon after served, to welcome the return of the Count. The enlivening wine went briskly round,

round, and e'er midnight, for till then was the feast prolonged; all past cares seemed buried in mirth, and in repeated bumpers to the health of the Count and his friends.—Yet of me, little notice was taken, all seemed to follow the example of my brother, who, as he grew warm with wine, relaxed much of the severity of his looks; yet he regarded me with cold neglect, and his guests soon caught the infection, except the elder stranger; whose open benevolent looks proclaimed the generosity of his soul, and inclined him to countenance the oppressed or the fallen: he was, he informed us, a native of *England*;—nor does the world boast such sons, plain, rough, but compassionate; generous, faithful, intrepid; afraid of nothing but dishonour: such was *Albany*, and such I ever found him, and for his sake, I have ever bestowed my best esteem on his countrymen, and held them dear.”—Here the face of the pilgrim seemed lighted up by a gleam of joy; his cheeks glowed, and his eyes sparkled with a fire, that sorrow seemed to have extinguished, though his years were few;—he clasped his hands, and casting up his eyes towards heaven, while sorrow again over-clouded his face.—“Alas, my dear country! am I doomed ever to wander far from thee!” he said, and covering his face with one hand for a moment, entreated the hermit to pardon his interruption, and continue his tale.

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The hermit, who saw his emotion with surprise and pity, suppressed his curiosity, and thus went on: "The stranger informed us he was a native of *England*, and had passed his whole life almost in foreign climes; he had early, with his father, visited the Holy-land; and the latter had died there, and the young *Albany*, (the name he took to announce his country;) was taken prisoner by the *Saracens*, and served them in their wars against each other: notwithstanding a long absence from his country and from Europe, his heart was still *English*, and remained uncorrupted.—His age seemed bordering on thirty years; his person tall, well-formed and majestic; his eye penetrating, his countenance open, expressive, and at times, thoughtful; his manners courteous, but not servile:—such was *Albany*, and my wonder was great, how the friendship that attached him to my brother, grew between men of manners and characters so different; but he had arrived at court from *Palestine*, only a few days before the Count and the rest had been surprised by the Corsairs; and knowing my brother only in adversity, had not yet developed his character."

"When the guests had withdrawn, I went to the chamber of *Josepha*, and found her up;—unmindful of the late hour; the room was lit only by the pale beams of the moon, and I felt the sadness of my heart increased:—" Why

" weeps

“ weeps my sister?” I said,—“ Because,” answered she, “ my dear *Ademar* no more rules here:—Alas! what a change will soon appear! Soon will the riot of our brother’s hours of mirth, drive thee from hence, and force me to prefer the gloomy convent, to this once beloved mansion.”

“ Think not so, my dear sister,” I said, “ a few days, and our unremitting cares to please him, will make our brother’s face to shine upon us; and when he knows that I mispent not his treasure; and that all those who stood highest in his favour, were most in mine, his jealousy and displeasure, will be no more.”

“ Mayst thou find it so,” rejoined *Josepha*, “ for while you inhabit here, so will I.”

“ I then counselled her to be attentive to the will of the Count, and left her to repose; but little did I take myself; a thousand thoughts and doubts disturbed me; yet not one of regret for the return of the Count.”

“ The lark had scarce announced the morn, when I left a sleepless couch, and hastened to the abode of *Adelaide*; determined to forget all vexation in her company, but, “ she was indisposed, and not to be disturbed,” was the answer given by her father, whom I met at the outer gate, talking to some of his hinds; nor did he ask me to enter his mansion, which was wont to fly open at my approach: but I was
no

no longer, as on the preceding day, lord of my late father's castle and domain.

"I left this mercenary Baron, disgusted with his demeanour, and on my arrival at the castle, found the Count and his two friends engaged in receiving the numerous guests who crowded to felicitate him on his return; feasting and riot resounded through each hall, for many days. By degrees, my brother's looks wore less severity, and my mind recovered its usual tranquillity; except when the remembrance of *Adelaide* disturbed me; but pride and reason combined to break her chains.

"*Josepha* seldom appeared; her sex and tender age, excusing her presence amongst the noisy crowd, now assembled in our late peaceful abode; but when commanded by the Count, she sometimes appeared: I observed that *Albany* regarded her with a marked attention, nor did she seem to view him with looks of aversion; but *St. Clair*, the younger stranger, often interrupted their conversation: he too had conceived a passion for *Josepha*; nor did he restrain it in the presence of the Count; but the free boldness of this young man, not agreeing with the modest reserve of my sister, she often kept her chamber to avoid him.

"Some days after the Count's return, when warm with wine, and elevated by the song of the Minstrels who celebrated the return of my brother; *St. Clair* in honour of that

event proposed that a *Tournament* should be held; and the third day thence was the time appointed. A large space before the castle, sheltered by trees, was the spot on which, (having previously been proclaimed by heralds) the *jousts* were to be held, and besides the neighbouring Knights and Barons, and their vassals and and those of the Count, many strangers also came. Two large scaffolds erected against the wall of the outer court, and shaded by a lofty oak, held the ladies, who came in numbers to behold the *jousts*; each interested for her favourite knight.

“ On the appointed day I arose with the dawn, and as I opened my chamber, I heard a foot retire, and softly retreat along a dark winding passage; I was about to pursue the footsteps, when a paper which lay at my feet, drew my attention, it was addressed to me; and advised, that I would, on some pretence, avoid entering the lists that day, nor during the *jousts*, join in the sports, but remain a spectator only; the scrole concluded with declaring, it was wrote by a friend, from important motives; which, however, would be soon disclosed, at present concealed his name. I thought it strange, but resolved, at least for that day, to follow the counsel of the unknown. I remained in my chamber, musing on this adventure, until roused by the bugle-horns, that proclaimed the *jousts* about to commence; I repaired unarmed to the lists, where all those

forms observed at more serious combats were omitted: all met in sport, and no treachery was apprehended, yet the blackest treachery was intended.

“ I joined *Albany*, who was not accoutered for the field: the young knights were impatient to begin, their helmets gaily distinguished by plumes, the colours of which denoted those ladies whom they professed to admire. I turned my eyes to the scaffolds, and beheld *Adelaide*, who appeared with superiour lustre, amidst a crowd of beauties, in converse with the Count; on perceiving me, a cold glance discovered to me her thoughts, and she avoided my eyes the rest of the day; which spight of jealousy and pride, were often involuntarily turned toward her. The prizes were to be conferred by her and *Josepha* on the respective victors. *St. Clair* now approached my sister, and the Count turning to her, she with apparent reluctance, presented, at his command, a knot of ribbon she had worn on her arm, to *St. Clair*, who proudly placed it on his helmet:—a frown darkened the brow of *Albany*, when he saw his rival graced with the colours of *Josepha*; which were azure and white, the emblems of sincerity and purity. When I expressed my discontent at this distinction, forced from my sister, to one whom her heart disapproved, *Albany* coolly replied, “ he may perhaps be deprived of his present honours :”—He was prevented from saying more, by the sounding
of

of the last charge, and the opening of the barriers:—the heralds now conducted two knights, attended by their squires, carrying lances for the combat;—one was soon unhorsed, and his conqueror suffered the same defeat from another; the sport was good, but no particular knight held long the glory of the field. At the appointed hour, the retreat was sounded, and the champions laying aside their temporary animosity, repaired to a spacious hall, where the board was covered with every delicacy, and the goblet passed swiftly round; while those of inferior degree were feasted in tents, on the outside of the lists. The banquet held to the going down of the sun, whose light was soon supplied by numerous tapers: during the repast, the white-robed Minstrels, who celebrated the feasts of our ancient heroes, now tuned their harps to gayer strains, and invited the younger knights to lead their partners through the mazes of the dance.”

“ I was about to give the hand of *Josepha to Albany*, when it was taken by *St. Clair*:—The Englishman looked anger, mixed with contempt, but only said, “Yon gay ape has been too quick for thee, but *Albany*, past his days of boyhood, will not contend with him in the dance, though he will never yield to him the prize in either love or war; but let him enjoy his present advantage:” the Count took the hand of *Adelaide*, who continued to regard him with expressive glances, during

the dance. Once I was about to solicit the hand of some lady, meerly to stand near her; but *Albany*, by engaging me in conversation, diverted me from it. Often I determined to shew him the scrole I had found in the morning; but the hurry of the dance, and the crowd that thronged the hall, constantly prevented me.

“When the banquet that succeeded the dance was ended, the guests retired; having been first invited to re-assemble with the rising sun the following morn.

“Morning came;—the early feast was spread in the hall, and I appeared, as before, unarmed:—“How,” cried *St. Clair*, “not enter the lists to-day!”—“the occasion, methinks, is none for *Ademar*,” interrupted the Count, “to take part in our sports.”—A smile of scorn, which appeared on the face of *Adelaide*, added a sting to these words; I was about to reply, when *St. Clair*, throwing down his gage, required me “to take it up, or all present would think meanly of me:—“and why so?” asked *Albany* in a severe tone: “who will dare question my honour, or my courage, both have been proved; yet, of this sportive war, I remain but a spectator; why may not this young lord do the same? and why should his courage, on the present occasion, be doubted?” Then turning to me, he said, “Lord *Ademar*, as our prowess is thus questioned, let

let us now try our force, let us enter the lists against each other, and break a lance in honour of the day."—"No!" exclaimed *St. Clair*, "I first challenged this lord, and I trust he wont refuse to meet me;" "nor do I mean it," replied I;—"and when I have contented this Chevalier, (addressing myself to *Albany*) I am ready to break a lance with you." I then dispatched an attendant for my armour; my friends who thronged around me, or assisted in buckling on my armour, prevented the Englishman, who seemed to have something of moment to communicate, from approaching me: I fancied too he looked agitated, and concerned; but a scarf given by *Adelaide* in our days of love, and which was tied on my helmet, drew my attention from him; and taking it from the casque, I returned it by the hand of my page to the haughty fair; then hastily leaving the hall, mounted a horse I found caparisoned in the court, and chusing a strong lance, entered the lists, pacing slowly round, in expectation of *St. Clair*, who soon appeared: the barriers were opened, and both turning, to give scope to our career; we met, our lances in the rest, they were soon shivered, we chose others;—I recollected the advice given in the scrole, and was on my guard;—we now returned to our respective stations; it was manifest that *St. Clair* now sought my life; but I received his shock unmoved, and un-horsed him; I avoided riding

over him, and alighting, took from his helmet the knot of ribbons given him by my sister, which I presented to *Albany*: desiring him “to keep it until the original donor had bestowed *another* upon him, with less reluctance than *that* had been given.” I then cast my eyes towards the spot, where the ladies were seated, but e’er I could observe what effect my recent triumph had on *Adelaide*, the founding of the second charge drew my attention to the lists; which a knight, armed at all points, had just entered. He was attended by a squire, likewise armed, and who, advancing towards me, delivered a message purporting, that “a friend of the defeated *St. Clair* desired me to the lists, where he hoped to reclaim the honour I had won less by strength, or skill in arms, than by chance.” I put my visor down, and as before, chose a strong lance; and, firmly seated, met my foe with so rude a shock, as tumbled him from his horse;—his foot remained entangled in the stirrup, whilst the horse affrighted, plunged with such violence, as to dash against the ground his rider, whose skull was broke before I could second the endeavours of many present to save him; at length we effected our purpose of disengaging him from the furious animal; but too late, he expired on the spot. Judge the surprize of all present; conceive my astonishment and horror, when, on taking off his helmet, my adversary was found to be no other than

than the Count, who, for reasons known only to *St. Clair*, and *Albany*, had entered the lists against me."

"My deep concern at his fate, added to the apprehension that those present would suppose me not ignorant of the person of my disguised antagonist; affected me to such a degree, that, seeing a dagger, which, (contrary to all rule) the Count had concealed on his person; I would have stabbed myself, had not *Albany* seized my arm, and prevented the blow. I remained for several days in a state of insensibility; they had buried the Count before my recovery: I then at once resolved on my subsequent conduct—but first, I produced the fatal scrole, avowed my intention of declining the combat, until impelled by *St. Clair*; and appealed to heaven as a witness of my innocence. *Albany* then directed the attention of all present, and said: "The evening preceding the first tournament, as he sat, after twilight, in the turret; he overheard the Count and *St. Clair* discoursing in the garden below: as they continued to walk but at times under the window, and at times to pass at some distance from it, the subject of their conversation reached him but at intervals, he however heard sufficient to inform him, that the *jousts* were less designed to celebrate the return of the Count from captivity, than for an opportunity of ridding himself of a brother, whom he had long considered as his rival in the affections

fections of his father, who had bequeathed that brother so great a part of those possessions, to which himself, by the right of primogeniture, should have succeeded."

"*Albany* proceeded to inform us; " he lost much of what was said, but that as they turned into another walk, the Count said,—be prosperous, and rid me of him—I see thou art most deserving of my confidence, that downright Englishman is not to be trusted, but do thou succeed, and *Josepha*, whom I designed to place in a convent, shall be your's."——
" Shocked at the base and deliberate treachery of this plan," continued *Albany*, " I passed a sleepless night, at the dawn I left my bed, and wrote that scrole which *Ademar* found."

" When *Albany* had finished; all present, now unbiaffed by hope or fear on the part of the Count, impartially declared their opinions; that on my unhorsing *St. Clair*, the Count had armed, to accomplish the purpose in which his minion had failed: one of his squires, in part, confirmed this supposition. All now were convinced that my life had been aimed at; but heaven, whose ways are inexplicable, thought fit to defeat the perfidious purpose, and punish the unnatural aggressor."

" Yet whatever consolation my ignorance of the Count's person, in this fatal encounter, might be supposed to afford me, the painful reflection that I had deprived a brother of life; incessantly tormented me. I long remained

mained inconsolable, and finally determined to leave *Provence*, if not for ever, at least to proceed on a pilgrimage to the Holy-Land. But my sister, young and lovely as she was, and heiress to large possessions, attached me to my country and to life, and much employed my thoughts. I considered how necessary it was, to leave her, before my departure, under a secure protection; I was not unacquainted with her predilection for *Albany*, or of his passion for *Josepha*; nor knew I any one more likely to make her happy than that brave Englishman, descended from a noble family, and habituated to tread in the paths of honour; had fortune been just to him, his merit had entitled him to her most liberal bounties; yet these it was in my power to bestow; he had rendered me the most essential benefits; saved my life, and vindicated my honour. Could I then do better for my sister, than to give her hand to him?—I seen them united, and leaving to them the castle, with all its dependencies; reserving only sufficient for the endowment of an abbey, and chapel, which I enjoined them to erect; I departed early one morn from the castle, leaving on my table a letter addressed to *Albany* and *Josepha*, in which, after expressing my affection and wishes for their happiness, I desired them to entertain no expectation of ever again seeing me.”

“ I assumed the habit of a pilgrim at the next town, and proceeding from thence, at length fulfilled

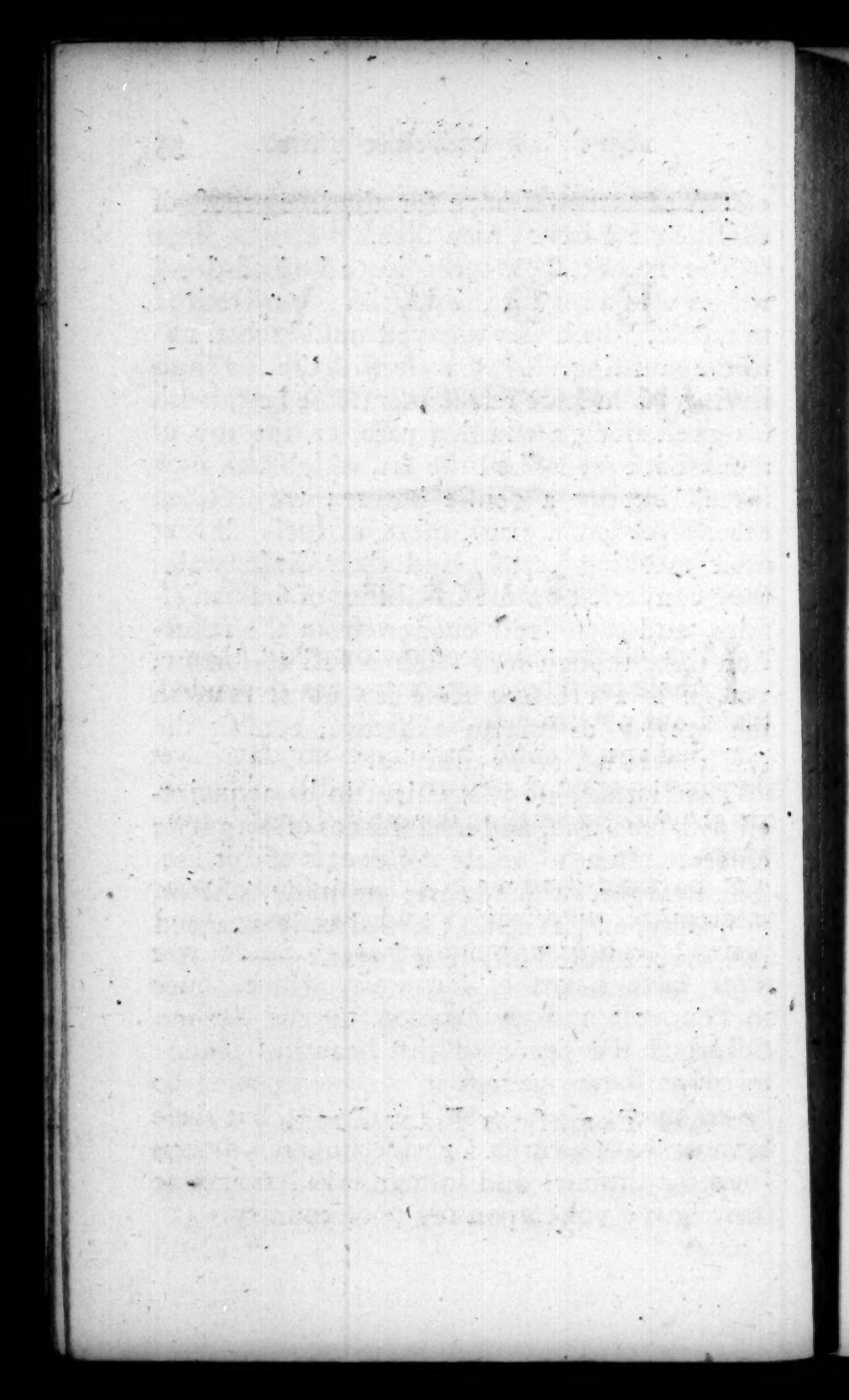
fulfilled my vow, by visiting the Holy Sepulchre. I continued a wanderer many years, and then returned to *Provence*: chance led me to this place, and I passed the first night, after my arrival, in the hut of a peasant; I arose with the dawn, when wandering among those hills, I discovered this wild, sequestered spot, and resolved herein to end my days. The peasants assisted me in forming this habitation, and in planting my garden; the labour of my hands cleared, and improved a considerable tract of desert; yon vines, and surrounding shrubbery are the result of my rural toil. Prayer, a retired and tranquil life, the cultivation of the earth, at once amusing and supporting my solitary life; has restored my mind to peace, much more than travel, or all my efforts had done. My wants are few, and those abundantly supplied by the produce of my garden, or the assistance of the shepherds and fishermen, by whom, in all their difficulties, or differences; I am appealed to as an adviser or arbitrator; they accordingly, one and all, have conceived an attachment to me, and diligently serve me. For the rest; I trust that my voluntary and deep regret; my penance, and final seclusion from the world; will expiate me, establish my innocence, and acquit me of the imputed guilt of a brother's untimely death. I should now claim your story, but that the night is too far advanced.

ed: To-morrow I hope for the like proof of confidence I have given thee."

The hermit then spreading a bed of dried rushes and a rug for the pilgrim; both retired to repose, which they enjoyed undisturbed until the morning. They arose with the sun, and having taken some refreshment, the hermit led his guest along a winding path, to the top of a hill that over-looked the sea, which was now stirred but by a gentle breeze: they seated themselves on a shaded seat of turf: during their morning repast, and their little walk, they conversed on the instability of human affairs, and each drew comfort from the reflection that, though man's life is full of sorrow, yet he is a creature of so few days, that, in the brevity of human existence, consists the best alleviation of its miseries.

The Hermit, now impatient to be acquainted with the name, and misfortunes of his guest; entreated him to relate the events of his life. The stranger, whose heart; gratitude, esteem, sympathy, and affection; had already attached to his venerable host, thus began:—

END of the FIRST BOOK.



E D W Y:
AN HISTORIC TALE.

BOOK II.

“ IT is less the history of my own life, than of those on whose fate mine has depended, that I am now to relate.

“ Sad and eventful have been my days; yet they have passed in obscurity, and in obscurity are they likely to end, though descended from kings.

“ England gave me birth, and, though your intercourse with the world has long since ceased; yet before you sought this solitude, you must have heard of the wars, which, since its conquest and civilization by the Saxons, disturbed the peace of that beautiful island: to what new masters it is yet doomed to be enslaved, Heaven only can tell! but these sad eyes have seen its rightful monarch driven from the throne; and foreign invaders impose their heavy yoke upon my poor country.

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“ From the reign of *Athelstan*; who by wisdom and valour united the seven kingdoms of Britain under his dominion; it enjoyed an uninterrupted peace, which continued till the reign of *Ethelred* the Second; one of his successors:—This prince was born with every quality to form an amiable man, and a good king, had not his mind been neglected, and his natural good disposition spoiled by the too great indulgence and example of a mother, proofs to what lengths the indulgence of her own passions could carry her.

You have heard of her, perhaps; she was that *Elfrida* so famed for her beauty, her ambition, and her cruelty:—who stopped at nothing to gratify ambition; and when she had fully gratified it, she rendered herself as famous for piety, that consists in the severest penance; hoping, no doubt, to efface from all minds the steps by which she had secured the throne for her posterity; and to turn aside the wrath of Heaven, by the atonement she was continually employed in making:—but what has since befallen, shews how vain is the hope which we place in the merit of voluntary seclusion, and lonely austerities.

The name of *Elfrida*; said the hermit, is not unknown to me; she was queen to *Edgar*, was she not? but more I am ignorant of, and wish to hear how she merits what you have said.

“ *Elfrida*,” continued the pilgrim, “ became

came the talk of the court; and the fame of her transcendant beauty so excited the passion of *Edgar*, that he dispatched Earl *Athelwold*, his favourite, to see if report had not enhanced the charms of *Elfrida*; but, if his observation justified that report; *Athelwold* was charged by the king, in his name, to demand *Elfrida* of her father, the Earl of *Devon*. *Athelwold* set out, attended by a suitable train, for the castle of *Orgar*, and found the charms of *Elfrida* to exceed even the most flattering description:—charms fatal to *Athelwold*, who, alike regardless of gratitude, duty, and respect to his sovereign; and of the imminent danger of deceiving him, returned to court, and represented *Elfrida* as indeed fair; but destitute of those surpassing charms, those bewitching graces, which give to beauty its greatest attraction, and which *Elfrida* was said to possess. He described her boasted charms as those of mere feature and complexion, in which almost every country lass, in a russet stole, and kirtle of her own spinning, might vie with *Elfrida*. *Edgar* believed his favourite, nor thought more of *Elfrida*."

"*Athelwold* let some months pass, before he asked permission to demand her in marriage for himself, " tho' not worthy (he said) to become the queen of *Edgar*, yet being heiress to the Earl of *Devon*, her great possessions will raise the fortune of thy servant; nor do I (added he artfully) mean to expose her defects

to the eyes of the world; they shall remain unnoticed at the distant and lonely castle of her father." *Edgar* consented, and *Athelwold* was received by the Earl of *Devon* with those honours and distinctions due to the favourite and confidant of the monarch: *Athelwold* received from *Orgar* the hand of *Elfrida*. A desire to visit the court was the immediate and most powerful motive of her union with *Athelwold*; she anticipated the pleasures of the court; the tribute due to unequalled beauty, the admiration of every beholder: by becoming the wife of *Athelwold*, *Elfrida* would attain the summit of her wishes. The Earl's attendance being required at *London*, he set out on his return thither, accompanied by his bride, whom *Athelwold* had previously determined to seclude from the court and the sight of *Edgar*. On the road to and within a few leagues of the capital, *Athelwold* had a castle, embosomed in a wood, whither he was wont to retire from the fatigue of business, and the bustle of the court. To this sequestered retreat he conducted his beauteous spouse; assigning reasons, (conceived however in very flattering terms) to *Elfrida*, for the necessity of a temporary residence therein. Months, however, passed away, and *Elfrida* saw no preparation for her appearance in public. *Athelwold* united to the bloom of youth, the most polished manners, yet could not reconcile *Elfrida* to her solitude, who though she obeyed her father,

father, without reluctance, in giving her hand to *Athelwold*, yet ambition, more than love, had induced her to comply with his choice. Her magnificent but gloomy retreat, became daily more irksome: *Athelwold* in vain opposed her entreaties to visit *London*; there his attendance on the king during the day, required his constant presence; but his duties ended; when the festive hall resounded with minstrelsy and mirth;—he left the palace, and with a lover's speed, hied to *Elfrida*. *Edgar* often questioned him on his absence from the court; to which *Athelwold* answered, that indisposition required frequent excursions to the country, for the benefit of the air. Thus passed some time, but the deceitful calm, in which he had suffered himself to be lulled, was disturbed by a storm, destructive of his fortune, his happiness, and his life. There was in the English court a lord named *Eldred*, between whom, and *Athelwold's* father, had long subsisted a mortal enmity; *Eldred* cherished this hereditary grudge against the favourite of *Edgar*; envy too, of the favour and confidence by which *Athelwold* was distinguished by the king, encreased the desire of revenge, by the hope of supplanting a rival, or of accomplishing his disgrace.

“*Eldred* had long ineffectually sought in the actions of *Athelwold*, which he watched with the most vigilant malignity; some error in conduct, by which he might disgrace the fa-

vourie of *Edgar*; but the loyalty and honour of *Athelwold* were unimpeachable, his secret marriage with *Elfrida* excepted; yet, in ascribing this step to the influence of the most irresistible, perhaps the noblest, of human passions; the imputed crime of *Athelwold* admits not only of extenuation, but forgiveness. The frequent and unusually prolonged absence of *Athelwold*, could not long escape the observation of *Eldred*; and, as malevolence naturally misconstrues the actions of those it hates, *Eldred*, following up his suspicions, at once justified them, and accomplished the ruin of his rival. Assuming the disguise of a pilgrim, the subtle courtier presented himself at the gate of *Athelwold's* castle; chance unfortunately seconded his purpose, and disclosed the fatal secret, on which depended the happiness and the life of *Athelwold*. It was on a fine evening, which had succeeded a burning day in one of the autumnal months, that *Elfrida*, attended by a train of damsels attired as the nymphs of *Diara*; herself emulating the goddesses in beauty and attire, a flowing garment of green looped above the ankle with pearl: her taper legs covered with a slight buskin, whilst the beauty of her feet appeared thro' the sandal; her robe was fastened at the breast by a knot of diamonds; and a silver zone, studded with jewels of different colours, bound it round her slender waste; her ebony locks, that loosely flowed in ringlets adown her

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her back, contrasted the snowey whiteness of the neck they partly revealed, partly hid: she carried in her hand a light javelin. Thus attired, and attended by her virgin foresters, she came forth. *Eldred* surprised, and dazzled by her charms, at once ascertained the motive of *Athelwold's* conduct, and no longer wondered that *Athelwold* kept her concealed from the public eye; and above all, from the King. *Eldred*, yet desirous to know if the mind of the fair unknown, accorded with her exterior graces; approached, and addressed her with a plausible tale of feigned distress; to which *Elfrida* listened with attention and sympathy; during a short conversation, she discovered those intellectual endowments, which enhance, and give real value to personal beauty.

“The curiosity of *Eldred* thus gratified, soon as the lovely wife of his rival was out of sight; he returned for *London*, where he arrived at sun-set. As he entered the outer court, he met *Athelwold*; and, with a fiend-like smile of affected friendship, saluted the destined victim of his secret malignity: the Earl, unconscious of impending ruin, sped on the wings of love to his beauteous consort. *Eldred* proceeded to the presence-chamber, from whence, attended by his court, *Edgar* went to see a Masque represented: but not the assemblage of female beauty; the charms of music, which attempering the soul, discharges from it every ruder emotion of animosity or revenge;

revenge; the graceful mein of the dancers; or the brilliancy of the general scene; inspiring joy, delight, and amenity; could for a moment suspend the fell purpose of *Eldred*, who impatiently waited the conclusion of the entertainment. At length the Minstrels laid aside their harps: then *Eldred*, approaching the king, softly intimated, that "he had somewhat of great concernment to impart to His Majesty." *Edgar* desiring him to proceed; "Not here, my sovereign," replied the crafty *Eldred*; "that which your servant has to reveal, as it peculiarly interests my royal master, should claim the honour of a private conference." The king, whose curiosity was excited by this artful and mysterious prelude, immediately withdrew.

"The crafty spy of *Athelwold*'s hoarded joys followed; and, with all the artful exaggeration of circumstance, or description; acquainted *Edgar* of the discovery he had made: that "chance had led him to the forest, where "he beheld the beauteous wife of *Athelwold*; "attended by her damsels; and going forth "to meet her lord, whose absence from court, "and indifference to its pleasures might now "cease to be the theme of wonder. Love," continued *Eldred*, "has converted its votary; "the ambition of *Athelwold* now aspires only "to please the loveliest of her sex; and pleasures more attractive and exalted, are substituted to those which *Athelwold* has been
wont

“wont to acknowledge in the court of London, and in the brilliant circle of beauty that adorns it.”

“The passions of *Edgar*, who was naturally amorous, and equally violent and haughty; inflamed by this discourse of *Eldred*, were on the point of breaking out in immediate vengeance on his late favourite; had not *Eldred* persuaded the monarch (who now condescended to be led by his envious and perfidious courtier,) “to dissemble his resentment of *Athelwold*’s deceit; for the present, to go to the banquet, which waited, to announce to his attendants his intention of enjoying the pleasure of the chase on the morrow;” it being previously concerted, that the royal train should, as if by chance, direct their course towards the residence of *Athelwold*.

“Love and rage had taken possession of the heart of *Edgar*; banishing the desire, and indeed the possibility, of repose: he went to the banquet, and prolonged till morn, the festive rite. And now the shrill horns gave notice, that all was prepared for the chase: *Edgar*, and those who were to accompany him, left the banquetting room, and changing their garb for one better suited to the sport, they were about to pursue; mounted their horses, taking the road to the forest, in which stood the castle of *Athelwold*. The freshness of the morning air, and the ardour of the chase, somewhat dissipated the effects of the

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the late revel; yet love and revenge predominated in the heart of *Edgar*; whilst the baser emotions of *Eldred* were compounded of malice, hatred, and envy; but above all, envy prevailed; envy,—that the man, whom he doomed his chief rival in the King's favour should, with all those advantages to which himself aspired, possess the charming *Elfrida*. The wish to deprive *Athelwold* of his consort, at all events, had prompted him, during the banquet, to anticipate the doubtful effect of *Edgar*'s resentment, and to offer himself to become the punisher of *Athelwold*'s presumption and falsehood to his royal master; yet, aware of *Athelwold*'s courage and prowess, he resolved, in case *Edgar* had given him the fatal commission, not to expose his person singly in accomplishing the death of his rival.

“In a few hours, *Edgar* and his train arrived at the forest; the King suddenly stopped short, and, as if casually recollecting that *Athelwold* had a castle on its borders, he declared his intention of halting there, to take some refreshment. The rising sun now cast his rays over the gilded plains of *Kent*: Nature and art seemed to vie in contributing to the magnificence of the surrounding scene; which comprehended an extensive and diversified prospect of hill and dale, of land and water; amidst which, *Canterbury*, its towering structures, and surrounding woods; the venerable remains of Roman grandeur; the distant

tant view of the castle and heights of *Dover*; appeared conspicuous: but the King, intent only on his fell purpose, disregarded the beauties which presented themselves on every side to his view.

“ *Eldred*, as had been agreed, went forward to the castle; on his arrival at the gate, an attendant sounded a horn, when, in a few moments, the gates were thrown open, and *Athelwold* advanced to meet him; but his looks betrayed some surprise and confusion, on the appearance of a visitor so unexpected, and so unwelcome. *Athelwold* had just risen with *Elfrida*, to enjoy the sweetness of the morning air, before his departure for *London*;—the song of the birds, hailing the rising sun, which yet had not dried the dew-drops that glittered on the leaves;—all contributed to flatter the Earl with hopes of his wonted pleasure in the company of his fair spouse e’er he left her, and his delightful retreat, for the noise of the city, and the bustle of the court. But how short-sighted are mortals!—*Athelwold* little apprehended that destruction was at hand, and would be his portion, instead of the wonted delight of his *Elfrida*’s converse; (which yet was often embittered by sad forebodings). Nor let any flatter themselves with the permanent or undisturbed enjoyment of ought, in the pursuit of which they have deviated from rectitude and honour. The object gained by dishonourable

dishonourable means, will produce, instead of promised joy, its inseparable attendants,—remorse, distrust, and fear: so experienced *Athelwold*.

“ When recovered from the surprise which *Eldred*’s appearance had caused; *Athelwold* hurried the Countess and her attendants into the castle; they were to have accompanied him to the out-skirts of the wood, where some of his foresters were waiting to escort them on their return. *Athelwold* had just given the usual orders to those who attended *Elfrida*, during her excursions from the castle, when the horn sounded at the gate, announcing the approach of *Athelwold*’s worst foe, and arousing him from his dream of happiness. At the sight of *Eldred*, these pregnant words (prompted by a melancholy presentiment of approaching ill) escaped, but in the inaudible accent of secret anguish from the lips of *Athelwold*, “ hast thou found me, O! mine enemy.” *Athelwold* too well knew that this lord was his implacable enemy; he advanced however, and received him courteously; invited him to enter the castle; but *Eldred*, declining the invitation, informed him, that the king was at hand, and proposed to hunt the deer in the forest: he also, lord *Athelwold*, requires your attendance at the chace, and will, e’er long, be at your gate: the king has dispatched me to signify his intention, and further, that the sport of the day ended, he will repose until to-morrow

morrow at the castle. *Athelwold* for some minutes stood fixed in astonishment and suspense; whilst *Eldred*, viewing him with malignant observation, exulted in his distress. The Earl, recovering himself, requested *Eldred* “to return to the king, express his joy at the honour intended his subject, and conduct him, with his train, to the castle, while preparations were made for their reception there.”

“*Athelwold* returned to *Elfrida*, whose curiosity was excited to learn the business of this early and unexpected visitant; but the discomposed and agitated appearance of *Athelwold* announced in part to *Elfrida*, the fatal business, which the Earl, throwing himself in the attitude of a suppliant at the feet of his astonished consort; pale, trembling, and breathless; proceeded to unfold; confessing to *Elfrida* “the double deceit, to which his uncontrollable love, inspired by her matchless and irresistible charms, had impelled him; *that* love, and *those* charms, had tempted him to resist the dictates of reason, prudence, and honour;—to incur the guilt, and, unless she aided to avert it, the danger and disgrace of deceiving the King. The lover, the husband of *Elfrida*; him to whose happiness and fortunes she had united her’s by every sacred, every tender tie; now implored her to assist him in averting the near and imminent danger which impended; to absent herself, during *Edgar*’s

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“ stay at the castle was impracticable ; yet, by
“ a temporary disguise, which should conceal
“ from the amorous monarch the lustre of her
“ charms ; by a prudent reserve which might
“ evade a display of the more brilliant and
“ fascinating power of her intellectual endow-
“ ments ; (“ what a request,” exclaimed *Ade-
mar*, “ to a young, beautiful, accomplished,
and, perhaps, ambitious female ! but pro-
ceed”——) the danger which menaced their
“ union and felicity, might be averted.”

“ During this interesting address, the coun-
tenance of *Elfrida* exhibited the various emo-
tions which it must be supposed to have inspi-
red ; grief and pity, however, predominated,
or seemed to predominate, in the bosom of *El-
frida*, who regarding *Athelwold* in silence for
a few moments, said, “ Hasten, my beloved,
“ to receive our sovereign ; but, if possible,
“ delay for a short time his entrance into the
“ castle ;—leave the rest to your *Elfrida*.”
She then withdrew.

“ *Athelwold*, whom no foe, however for-
midable ; no danger of battle, however peri-
culous, could appal ; now dreaded to meet the
man whom he had deceived ; but, dissembling
his fear, he assumed an air of satisfaction and
joy, at the approach of *Edgar*, who now ap-
peared with his train at the gate of the castle :
at the sight of *Athelwold*, who had so long
possessed the first place in his favour and con-
fidence, *Edgar*’s regard returned, and his
heart

heart felt a temporary remission of resentment and revenge. The wretched *Athelwold* attended *Edgar* into the castle, whose opening gates (the harbingers of their owner's destruction) admitted the royal train. *Athelwold* directed his warden to order the banquet, and encouraged a faint hope from the King's not having yet enquired for the Countess. The Earl, with a seemingly unembarrassed air, held a conversation alternately with the monarch and his courtiers, enquired of the latter concerning the last night's masque at court, and proposed being present at the next. The collation was now announced, it consisted of various refreshments, and all the delicacies of the season, suited to a morning repast; but what was the horror, the despair of *Athelwold*, when he beheld *Elfrida* enter, her charms enhanced by every adornment that the richest attire, or the attractive arts of the toilet could supply; he changed colour, trembled; his failing sight almost ceased to recognize its objects; his blood rushed impetuously to the heart, and almost stopt his respiration; whilst *Elfrida*, covered with blushes, advanced towards the astonished *Edgar*, who stood gazing on her; but, when she attempted to throw herself at his feet, he flew to prevent her, and kissing her hand, exclaimed, "Kings should kneel to *Elfrida*, not *Elfrida* to Kings."—What an impassioned declaration from the monarch to his subject, and what intentions, on the part of *Edgar*, it im-

plied! *Athelwold* however, endeavoured to recover himself in entertaining his royal guest, who suffered, rather than accepted his attentions. The appearance of *Elfrida* rekindled his anger against *Athelwold*, yet he repressed it, nor did a gesture indicate the deep displeasure of *Edgar*, or his vengeance meditated.

“ *Elfrida* had adorned with every ornament of dress her person, which was, exclusively of artificial aid, possessed of every perfection of grace and beauty, of which the female form is susceptible: in her attentions to the royal guest, she displayed with studied art and advantage the endowments of her mind, and the graces of her person; the qualities of the former gave an inexpressible charm and effect to the latter: in short, *Elfrida* studiously and successfully endeavoured to inspire *Edgar* with a thorough conviction of the duplicity of *Athelwold*, and a violent attachment to herself.

“ The repast ended, *Edgar* called lord *Eldred* apart, and in a short, but important conference, gave him his instructions concerning his conduct, after they should have left the castle. The King then desired the attendance of *Athelwold* at the chace; and now addressing himself to *Elfrida*, signified to the Countess his intention, that “ the chace ended, he proposed to return, and pass the remainder of “ the day, and the following night, at the “ castle:” he then departed. *Athelwold*, not even allowed to take other leave of *Elfrida* than

than by looks expressive of regret and despair; (for the sad presaging soul of the Earl was oppressed by a melancholy foreboding of impending calamity) joined the royal train."

"During the chase, *Edgar* kept *Athelwold* near his person; the devoted victim of his love or vengeance. It may be presumed that *Eldred*, who, through the day, never once lost sight of *Athelwold*, was charged with the fatal instructions of *Edgar*; and that, had the monarch not been explicit, and but darkly hinted his wishes; that the mortal enemy of *Athelwold* would, with alacrity, accelerate the removal of a rival, of an obstacle to the gratification of his own ambition, and of a monarch's desires. The daring and fraudulent presumption of his subject had interposed between the inclinations of *Edgar*, and the possession of the beauteous *Elfrida*. The offended majesty, and the disappointed affection of the monarch, demanded the punishment of *Athelwold*, and the restitution of *Elfrida*."

"Whilst all were eager in pursuit of the stag; *Edgar*, slackening his speed, engaged *Athelwold* in a concerted discourse, yet on indifferent topics; the King prolonged this conversation, till his train, in the ardour of pursuit, had left him and *Athelwold* far behind: the Earl, who, at the beginning of their discourse, had been apprehensive that *Edgar* would have proceeded to upbraid him with his conduct respecting *Elfrida*, felicitated him-

self on not receiving the censure he expected; in this moment of his fate, an arrow, discharged by an unknown hand from a thicket, transpierced the unfortunate *Athelwold*, who instantly falling from his horse, expired, his last breath pronouncing the name of *Elfrida*.

“ *Edgar* called to some of the hunters, and shewed them the body of the Earl in the last agony; he was taken up, and carried to the castle. His death was supposed to be the effect of chance; but the arrow was sped by the hand of *Eldred*.

“ The King affected concern for the death of his favourite, and ordered him an honourable interment, befitting his rank; he remained comforting the fair widow, till evening, and then left her to the care of her attendants, and returned to his palace; but a few weeks saw him publicly espouse, and crown her *England's* queen.

“ *Ethelred* was the fruit of this marriage, but e'er he arrived at manhood, *Edgar* died, and was succeeded by *Edward*, a son by a former queen. This young prince was stiled the beloved of all hearts; but the manner of his death gave him another title. His gentle demeanor, during the life of his father, had gained him the seeming affection of his step-dame, to whom he paid equal duty, as to the king, and to her son the affection of a brother; and, when he became *England's* monarch, treated her with the same respect as before.

“ One

“ One day as he pursued the chace, near the castle of *Corffe*, where the queen dowager then held her residence, he stopped to enquire after her health; but refused to alight, being impatient to join the hunters. *Elfrida* gave her orders to two attendants,—wine was brought by one, which the unsuspecting prince took, and drank to her health, but there were none to pledge him: *—while he held the bowl to his lips, the other attendant stabbed him behind. Thus, without intending it, *Elfrida* revenged the death of her husband on the innocent son of his murderer;—such is the mysterious dealing of heaven, and the eventful things which followed, shew us that the Almighty, though a while he may seem to sleep, yet soon or late, his wrath will overtake crimes so black as murder; nor did his vengeance stop at the death of young *Edward*.—But I must not anticipate.

“ When the King found himself wounded, he spurred his horse, and his attendants being at a distance, he endeavoured to overtake them; but bleeding fast, his sight swam; the reins fell from his hand on the horse's neck, who feeling himself at liberty, sprung forward, and the bleeding Prince, falling from his sad-

* The origin of drinking to persons next one, and their pledging the drinker, arose from the frequent murder of the Saxons while they drank, by the Danes:—he who pledged, protected the drinker, and was in turn defended by him from their treacherous foes.

dle, was dragged, and dashed to pieces, e'er his affrighted steed could be stopped.

“ He was found in this mangled condition by his train, who, on hearing the noise of the horse's feet, turned, and saw him flying with the utmost speed, dragging along the now lifeless body of the King, whose foot was still entangled in the stirrup. They conveyed it to a neighbouring abbey, where it was privately interred by the sorrowing attendants; and, from the manner of this prince's death, he was distinguished by the title of *Edward the Martyr*.

“ Though no one doubted by whose contrivance he died, yet none could object to his brother *Ethelred's* succeeding him, who was the last of the blood-royal, and too young to be suspected as an associate in the crime of his mother. The tragical death of *Edward* afflicted him, and he bewailed it with the bitterest lamentations and tears; nor did the crown which he gained by his death, comfort him for the loss of a brother so dearly beloved*.

The most splendid preparations were made for crowning him;—the ceremony over, and the kingdom settled in peace, and secured to

* History says, that when *Elfrida* was informed of the Prince's sorrow for his brother, she flew enraged to his apartment, and snatching a large wax taper from an attendant, beat him with violence, telling him he should have cause for his tears. 'Tis said he ever after held wax tapers in abhorrence.

her son;—*Elfrida* seeing her utmost ambition gratified, in being the wife and mother of a British monarch, resigned the government of the young king to *Edgar*, a powerful lord, and related to the king, her husband. The crimes by which she attained those high honours, which she had deemed her only earthly happiness, now sat heavy on her soul; she found that peace, which innocence and goodness alone bestow, wanting; and knowing that, though her son was acknowledged as their sovereign, she was held by her subjects in abhorrence; she resolved to seclude herself from a world she could no longer controul. The Convent of *Worwell* had been richly endowed by her, during the life of *Edgar*, where continual masses had been said for the repose of the soul of *Athelwold*, and to atone his death;—to this Convent she retired, adding to her former endowments much treasure: there she ended her days, never more interfering in the affairs of the kingdom.

“ When *Ethelred* became king, the realm was in a rich and flourishing condition, and would have remained so, had he not been too easily misled by flatterers, and a too great indulgence of passion, he was never taught to controul. Mistaken fondness of mothers!—for to them belong the care of early infancy; little do they ween the evils that spring from their vain indulgence!

Ethelred

“ *Ethelred* was now of an age when exterior graces are most admired ; Nature had endowed him with “ too much of ornament in outward “ shew ; in inward, less exact.” His people never saw him without acclamations of joy, and the first year of his reign deceived not their most high-raised expectations. His first act, after being seated on the throne was, to remove the body of the martyred *Edward* to *Shaftesbury* church, and have it interred with every honour. All who saw his beginning reign, were filled with the most flattering hopes, that they were going to enjoy a state of the utmost tranquillity and happiness, under a prince who had given so early and so strong proofs of the goodness of his heart ; but *St. Dunstan*, who had performed the ceremonies of baptizing and crowning him, by the spirit of prophecy which he was thought to possess, foretold the miseries England would sustain in his reign*. Thus, guided by Earl *Edgar*, did the three first three years of *Ethelred*’s reign pass.

“ Though the *English* court was full of ladies, adorned with that beauty so common in our isle ; the young monarch beheld their charms with that gallantry due to the fair, without shewing any partial attachment : but the moment approached, when he ceased to boast his liberty.

* See *RAPIN*, Vol. II. for this Prophecy of *St. Dunstan*.

“ One day, as he roved through the streets of *London*, attended by a numerous and splendid train, the windows and doors were, as usual, crowded to behold him. He saw with pleasure those testimonies of his people’s love, and often raised his head toward the windows, to give a better view of his person.

“ As he passed a house of mean appearance, he saw at a casement two young persons; one of them seemed not more than seventeen, but of so surprising a beauty, as fixed his attention.

“ The pleasure he took in gazing on her, would have longer detained him, had not the high mettle of his horse, impatient of controul, carried him away; but though lost to his view, his mind still dwelt on her idea; nor did the chase, in which he was wont to delight, divert his mind one moment from it; and long e’er the stag was run down, he pretended sudden indisposition, and with his train returned to the city.

“ As the movements of a King, are soon known, the same croud attended his return, as saw him go forth; but he heard not the acclamations of the multitude, with the pleasure he was wont. She who had charmed him, and whom his eyes were in search of, appeared not: the casement at which he had seen her, was closed. The disappointment spread an instant gloom over his countenance, he grew absent and mindless; nor attended to
the

the discourse which those who were nearest addressed to him. *Alwin*, a young lord, that stood high in his favour, soon observed the change, and intreated to know the cause. The demand roused *Ethelred*, and he said to the favourite with a disordered air,—" When we arrive at the palace, I will hide nothing from thee ; meantime, take no heed of my behaviour."

When they reached the court, the King bade *Alwin* follow to his cabinet alone ; he there owned the suddenness of his passion, the first he had ever felt ; and his despair of ever again beholding the object of it.

" *Alwin*, who knew the young monarch's disquiet proceeded from his being hitherto a stranger to love, tried to inspire him with hope, by assurances that he saw no difficulties in the way to his happiness. " Resume then dread Sir, (went on *Alwin*) your wonted gaiety, and cheer your servants with those smiles so dear to them : 'tis criminal to entertain a doubt of success ; whatever charms this fair damsel may possess, the knowledge of the high honour you confer, by giving her a place in your heart, which the fairest dames of your court have sought in vain to melt ; will dazzle, and make her an easy, and a willing conquest." To this flattery *Ethelred* only answered, by shaking his head in silence, which convinced *Alwin* that when a violent

violent passion takes possession of the heart, self-love ceases.

“ *Ethelred* returned to the great hall, where the banquet and his nobles waited. But vain were all endeavours to amuse him; neither the rich-spread board, the enlivening goblet, that sparkled high with wine, nor the voices, nor skilful fingers of his minstrels; though they tunefully caroled the heroic deeds of *Saxon* heroes, could efface from his mind one moment, the unknown fair; and he waited with impatience the return of *Alwin*, who had gone in pursuit of her. Her habitation was soon discovered by the King’s description; and on enquiry, was found “ to be the house
“ of an artisan, who had lately buried his wife;
“ and bestowed the entire profits of his occupation on the education of an only daughter, in a convent; that not long since, the
“ damsel, whose name was *Elgiva*, had returned to the house of her father, where she
“ resided with a young maiden, her kinswoman, named *Birtha*;—that they were pious
“ and industrious, and spent their time in acts
“ of devotion, and in striving to console the
“ artisan, whose trade began to fail.”—This information raised no difficulty, and *Alwin* entered the house, enquired for the master, ordering somewhat in the way of his occupation, and questioned him of his affairs. The artisan artlessly informed him of all he wished to know, and the wily *Alwin* said, “ ’Twas

“pity, that maids so virtuous and fair, as
“report spoke them, should languish their
“youth in retired poverty:—I have interest,
“(he went on) at court, and our youthful
“monarch is compassionate to all the distresses
“of his people; and in his ruth* for them,
“feels his highest pleasure when he can af-
“ford them succour:—but may not I see the
“damsels?” “Alas! my Lord,” answered
the artisan, “however good or generous our
“sovereign, I can hope nothing from his
“bounty, who am among the lowest of his
“subjects.” “To prove I flatter not thy
“misfortunes with mere words,” said *Alwin*,
“here are more solid proofs of my sincerity,
“and the bounty of the King; take this purse
“to supply thy present wants, until I have
“taken measures to ensure thy future good
“fortune.” The artisan, in amazement held
the purse, loth to accept, yet afraid to refuse
it: but *Alwin* seeing his confusion, said;—
“Fear nothing, I come not to seduce the
“damsels; ’tis gentle pity of their state, leads
“me to make these offers, nor shall I desire to
“see them but in thy presence.” These words
assured the artisan, and he conducted *Alwin*
to the chamber, where at work sat *Elgiva* and
Birtha, in plain and negligent habits. He
easily distinguished the daughter of the arti-
san to be the person whose beauty had made

* Pity for the miseries of others.

so great an impression on the King; she was tall, and of a delicate shape, and her air bespoke modesty and wisdom. Her face was embellished with all that softness and beauty which adorns our *English* dames; that fair and blooming complexion, teeth of pearly whiteness, and lips of vermillion hue; eyes blue, sparkling, yet full of sweetness; with fair and flowing locks, so peculiar to her country.

“The favourite, though used to beauty, could not conceal his surprize at so many charms in one so humbly born: he remained silent and confused, and *Elgiva* was no less so, but from a different cause. The face of *Alwin* was not unknown to her; a secret emotion had imprinted on her memory, all those who were near the King, as he rode through the city. *Alwin* recovering from his surprize, approached her, with the respect due to one of high birth, and said; “Pardon, “Lady, this intrusion; but my curiosity to “behold one of whom I have heard so much, “has caused it; but to atone for my temerity, “I will instantly inform the King, who has “too just a sense of merit, such as I now behold, not to render it happy as it deserves.” *Elgiva*, tho’ little used to converse with any man but her father, answered with modesty and grace, the courtly speech of *Alwin*, who impatient to inform the King of his suc-

cess, took his leave, and ceased to wonder at his sudden passion for her.

“ *Ethelred*, with anxious impatience, expected the return of his favourite, watched his countenance as he entered; and read success in the air of satisfaction that appeared on it;—but when *Alwin* related the conversation he held with the artisan and his daughter, *Ethelred* overwhelmed him with caresses: but as he stood much in awe of Lord *Edgar*, he judged it not prudent to visit *Elgiva* in her present abode. In a wood, not more than two leagues distant from the city of *London*, he had a hunting lodge, where, after the fatigues of the chase, he often reposed; thither he desired *Alwin* to conduct the artisan and his family.

“ While *Ethelred*, with his favourite, busied themselves to provide a pleasant retreat for *Elgiva*, she was filled with disquiet, at sight of *Alwin*, who had rekindled sentiments in her breast, which her virtue and reason had long combated.

“ Soon after *Ethelred* ascended the throne, the father of *Elgiva*, from a curiosity common to all ranks of people, carried his family to see the new King: it was on one of those days when majesty appears in its utmost splendour; and was too much for the young *Elgiva*; from that moment his image was never absent from her heart; she thought, nor spoke, nor dreamt of nothing else, but was not aware of

of the cause, until *Birtha*, a few years older, made her, by some serious discourse, enter into herself, and endeavour to stifle an inclination so wild and unwarrantable.

“ More than two years had passed in these endeavours; when one day, as she lamented to *Birtha*, how ineffectual they were, the trampling of horses, and the acclamations of the people, drew them to the window; but what was the surprise of *Elgiva*, to behold the young monarch, more graceful, more glorious, than when first she beheld him; his eyes which met and were soon fixed on hers, rendered her unable to retire from the window, but soon recovering the use of her reason, after he was passed she cried out;——

“ Alas! dear *Birtha*, what a fatality! why
“ did I see him again? but I sought not the
“ dangerous, the seducing view! nor will I
“ be amongst those who testify their joy at
“ his return;” and steady to this resolve, she shut her casement, and retired to the back part of the house, to avoid even the temptation of seeing again an object so dangerous to her peace; and in that chamber was she found by *Alwin*.

“ Great was her perturbation after his departure; but as ten days elapsed before he again appeared, she began to hope she should see him no more: meantime, love, reason, and prudence contended in her breast, and banished all peace or repose.

“ One morning sitting in that chamber where *Alwin* had held his last conversation with her, and which she now preferred as the most retired in the house; she beheld, introduced by her father, the favourite of *Ethelred*, who approached her with the utmost respect:—“ Daughter,” said the artisan, “ I have received an order from the King, to remove from my house; this Lord is charged with it, and to day we must depart; prepare yourself to obey.”

“ The consternation of *Elgiva* was so great, it took from her the power of replying. *Alwin* who saw it, and wished to remove her perplexity, said, “ Lady, the commands of the King have nothing in them to alarm you; and are only the effects of his royal bounty and goodness: he wills me to conduct you, your father, and kinswoman, to the retreat he has allotted you, where you have only to take care of a life, he has determined to render fortunate.”

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

E D W Y:

E D W Y:
AN HISTORIC TALE.

B O O K III.

“W HILE *Alwin* disclosed the intentions of *Ethelred*, he watched the looks of *Elgiva*, which betrayed greater marks of sorrow than of joy; and it gave him so high an opinion of her virtue, as determined him to save her at least from violence, if not from dishonour.

“When he ceased speaking, he bowed, and left the chamber, to prevent her answer; the artisan attending him, to whom he gave a purse filled with gold, and desired he would settle his affairs in *London*, to which he was no more to return; then named the hour when with his family he was to meet him at a distant part of the city. The close of day was the time appointed; but when the moment came, a thousand terrors arose in *Elgiva*’s mind; while her father dazzled by the promises

mises of *Alwin*, and impatient to see himself in another state, hurried her and *Birtha* to the appointed place. A litter, with a horse and two attendants, waited their approach, and soon conveyed them to their destined abode.

“ Night had spread her sable veil over all things; the moon was in her wane, but the faint glimmering of the stars, afforded light sufficient for their little journey. When the litter stopped, *Elgiva* saw by the glare of many torches, Lord *Alwin* approach, who helped her to alight: “ My Lord,” said the virtuous maiden, giving him her hand, “ if
“ you would have me receive this honour
“ without inquietude, assure me you are here
“ alone.” *Alwin*, who saw and pitied her apprehensions, said as he led her into the house;
“ Be at peace, Lady, you are entire mistress
“ here; no one has followed my footsteps;
“ and he who longs with impatience to behold
“ you, will never approach but at those hours
“ that can give you no fears:”—“ Then, my
“ Lord,” said *Elgiva*, “ be my advocate with
“ him, whose name nor designs I am not ignorant of; and have the goodness to remind him, that though he is a great King,
“ and I one of his most lowly subjects, he has
“ no power over my innocence and virtue.”
—“ Be at peace, gentle maid,” interrupted *Alwin*, “ I trust that there will be no occasion
“ for such a remonstrance; but should there,
“ the little influence I possess, shall be used
“ with

“ with my Lord, in thy favour. *Ethelred*,
“ ’tis true, adores thee, but with such sincere
“ passion, as gives thee absolute power to in-
“ spire him with desires virtuous and ho-
“ nourable.” As he said this, they entered
the hall, which was decked with care, and il-
luminated with many tapers; he summoned
the domestics, and presenting them to *Elgiva*,
entreated she would consider them her atten-
dants, assuring her, she might command their
ready obedience; then took his leave, and
left the artisan and his family to reflect at li-
berty on their change of fortune.

“ A female attendant offered to conduct
them through the apartments: *Birtha* (such
power has the glitter of the world over most
minds) followed with pleasure; but *Elgiva*
seemed little elated by all she beheld; though
the furniture, cabinet, and wardrobe sur-
passed what she had ever seen, she looked at
them with virtuous contempt, as baits laid for
her honour, and reminded *Birtha* of her for-
mer exhortations.

“ Two days they were left in tranquillity to
enjoy their change of fortune; the third saw
Ethelred attended by *Alwin* at the gate. They
found the artisan (who was warned of their
approach by a page that speeded before) at-
tending their arrival: as the King entered,
the father of *Elgiva* kneeled, but confused,
and unused to such a presence, could only
murmur

murmur out his gratitude and respect. *Ethelred* eager to see his fair mistress, gave him, with a gracious air, his hand to kiss, and desired to be conducted into the house; the artisan throwing open the door of the apartment where *Elgiva* and *Birtha* attended his coming. *Ethelred* hastened to prevent their kneeling, and saluted both, but with the most distant respect; "Were it not a pity," said he, turning to *Alwin*, "that such fair flowers should expand their sweetness, and bloom only for those who from the coarseness of their nature, are incapable of setting the value on them that they merit."

"*Elgiva*, but with the most respectful modesty, preventing the answer of the favourite, said; "As heaven thought fit to place us in the humble vale of life, we were not dissatisfied with our lot; and only anxious to preserve unfullied our virtue and our fame; treasures as precious to the lowly peasant, as to those in high estate."

"*Ethelred* felt her meaning, but making no answer, asked the artisan for refreshment; saying with a smile,—"Won't our host treat his guests, and use his influence with these fair damsels to make them welcome?"

"The artisan bowing, left the hall to order a banquet, which was served in an alcove, whose latticed windows were shaded by eglantine and woodbind.

"*Ethelred*

“ *Ethelred* obliged this little company to seat themselves at table, saying, “ ’Tis in
“ such retired scenes where the pomp and
“ burthen of majesty is laid aside, that princes
“ enjoy their sweetest pleasures.”

“ Some hours passed rapidly in this first visit, and *Ethelred* deemed them the most delightful of his life: and though he usually past part of each day at the abode of *Elgiva*, and soon made no secret of his passion; the behaviour of the virtuous maid inspired him with respect, and made him treat her in such guise, as left her fearless of any violence: eased of her first fears, the cares of *Elgiva* were wholly bent to conceal from her sovereign, the passion, that spite of her prudence and virtue, preyed on her own heart, lest he should take advantage of it. Meanwhile, *Ethelred* finding her cold and averse to his love, began to fear she had not a heart to give; this thought filled him with jealousy, and threw a restraint and gloom over his behaviour: she saw it, and not knowing what to attribute it to, was grieved, and it hastened a resolution she had formed, to entreat he would suffer her to end her days in a cloister: prudence, virtue, and honour, forbid her indulging a passion for her sovereign; and love forbade her giving her hand to any other: but as oft as she strove to reveal her purpose, her heart failed her, and the beginning words were interrupted by sighs, and every mark of a deep dejection, which
confirmed

confirmed the King in his suspicions that *Elgiva* had disposed of her heart e'er he had seen her. Pride, at length made him resolve to bestow her on his rival; and he repaired to the lodge to know who was the happy man: he soon entered on the subject, and amidst compliments and reproaches, declared his resolution no longer to obstruct her happiness.

"A false generosity inspired by pride and despair, made *Ethelred* deceive himself, and think he could do as he said; but how great was his astonishment when he heard *Elgiva*, (thrown off her guard by the surprise she was in) say, with a voice interrupted by emotions she could not hide:—"Ah! can my Lord suppose that one honoured by his love, could ever entertain an affection for any other!—she stopped at these words, and recovering from the shame that overwhelmed her at the discovery she had so unwittingly made of her long hid passion, entreated in the most earnest and steady manner for permission to retire to a convent. "Let me owe," said she, "my admission to the bounty of my sovereign; and a prayer for his eternal and temporal happiness shall be added to every orison I say to that being to whom I am about to dedicate the rest of my days." Tears filled her eyes, and she turned aside to conceal them.

"*Ethelred* surprised, but charmed with the discovery of her love, and with her virtuous reasons for concealing it, both which stood confessed;

confessed ; and despairing of gaining her on other terms, offered her his hand, and vowed to love her, and her only.

“ I shall not,” said the pilgrim, “ take up your time with the raptures of *Ethelred* : nor the joy of *Elgiva* ; though the latter was restrained by her modesty, and some foreboding fears ; but how unable is the youthful mind, to resist a present good, or fear, if it is at a distance, an impending evil !”

“ *Ethelred*, ever impetuous, and impatient to be united to *Elgiva*, returned to court, leaving *Alwin* to conduct her, her father, and *Birtha* there. As soon as the grey twilight had shrouded all things : *Ethelred* summoned a council, and declared his resolution to espouse her whom only he could love. A murmur of discontent ran through the assembly ; but *Ethelred* impatient of controul, left the council chamber, and desiring the Bishop of *Durham* to follow to his closet, he declared to that Prelate his fixed resolve, and added he could not live without *Elgiva* ; whose virtue had impressed him still more than her outward charms. At his desire, the Bishop who saw to oppose would only exasperate him, promised to attend in the royal chapel, at the close of day, where he was soon joined by *Ethelred*, and soon after by *Elgiva*, her father, *Birtha*, and two female attendants, conducted by *Alwin*, who led his trembling charge to the great altar, where the King received her, and with-

out other witnesses the ceremony was performed. *Ethelred* presenting his fair bride, as their Queen, to those who were present, led her by a private way to the royal apartments, and *Alwin* conducted the artisan to the lodge in the forest of which he was made sole master, where he passed his days in peaceful retirement.

“ Of all the numerous beauties that graced the court of *Ethelred*, not one remained after his marriage, except the wives of a few nobles, whose employment near the King's person, obliged them to remain in the palace.

“ For a long time the possession of his fair spouse, easily consoled him for the little complaisance of his court : Heaven seemed to smile on his union, by sending him an heir to the crown, who was named *Edmond*.

“ The two succeeding years brought a daughter and another son. At length the fertility of *Elgiva*, her virtue, her mild and unassuming goodness, and the opinion that the affection of the King was unabated, determined the nobles to address him to crown her Queen, whom he had thought fit to espouse ; and they deputed Earl *Edgar*, (who had not abandoned the court, and whom an intimacy with *Elgiva*'s character, had reconciled to a marriage he at first lamented ;) to intreat he would appoint a day for the coronation.

“ *Edgar* undertook this embassy with pleasure, and hastened to the apartment of *Elgiva* to acquaint her with the wish of her subjects :

On

On entering the chamber, he was surprised to behold her in tears, and *Birtha* endeavouring to comfort her; the Earl was soon, in broken accents, made acquainted with the cause of her sorrow, and heard with amazement that for more than a month; coldness and indifference had succeeded to that tender affection; that had constituted her's and the happiness of the King for four years. In vain, with kind zeal did *Edgar* strive to banish her suspicions: *Ethelred's* behaviour had convinced her they were but too well grounded; nor was she deceived; a new attachment had disgusted him, with what he had pursued with too tender an ardency; and he repented having entered into engagements that could be dissolved only by death: but *Elgiva*, ever virtuous and discreet, while she lamented his coldness, concealed her fears that it was caused by a new attachment: she would fain have hid the errors of a husband, too much beloved, even from *Edgar*; though amongst all his nobles she knew him the one who held his interest dearest.

“ The Earl entreated she would be composed until he had seen the King, and went from her apartment to his closet: he was alone with *Alwin*, with whom he seemed much displeased. On the entrance of *Edgar*, the King turning towards him, said with a wrathful voice;—“ What think you, my Lord, of
“ the subject who has the boldness to refuse
G 2 “ obedience

“obedience to the commands of his sovereign?” *Edgar* was about to reply, when *Ethelred* impatiently interrupting him, went on, “I have for some time,” he said, “made serious reflections on the imprudence of my engagement with *Elgiva*; I know her presence is poison to the eyes of my people; I cannot repair the fault of having married her but I will give my court the pleasure of sending her from it; nor shall she longer alienate the hearts of my subjects, nor render my court a desert by her presence; and it was my orders for her retiring hence, that *Alwin* had the temerity to disobey.”—“do my senses deceive me,” interrupted *Edgar*, “or do I hear aright! is it *Elgiva* you would banish your presence! her, whose conduct has justified your affection! to whom the state is indebted for sons, who are considered as the future heirs of the throne; one for whom your people have conceived so perfect an esteem, that they entreat you, by me, to set the crown on her head; whom they long to acknowledge as their Queen; and such an unlooked for change would now fill them with discontent.”

“*Ethelred* was astonished, but in no disposition to hear reason; and finding Earl *Edgar* and *Alwin* too much in the interest of *Elgiva*, to hope for their assistance to get rid of her; he called in one of his train, and bid him acquaint her with her fate: and spight of all

all *Edgar* (who till now had preserved some influence over him) could say, the unfortunate *Elgiva* received his orders to leave forever the palace and presence of the King.

“ Her grief was equal to her affection for her Lord; she called for her children, and having embraced and wept over them, she turned to Lord *Edgar*, who had come to offer any marks of friendship within his power.—

“ I have nothing to ask for myself, my Lord,
“ but as I fear their mother’s fate may extend
“ to these poor babes, I beg your protection
“ for them;” she then renewed her caresses and tears; and supported by the Earl and *Birtha*, went down the palace stairs, and getting into a litter, was carried to that abode in the forest where her father had resided until his death, which happened three years after her ill-fated marriage.

“ This retired abode was the place appointed for her residence; and there it was the orders of the King she should remain without going beyond the limits of those deep shades that surrounded her. On her arrival she was put to bed, where a long and painful illness detained her.

“ *Ethelred* rejoiced to find this bar to his pleasures removed, pursued them openly; and soon placed in the apartments of *Elgiva*, her who had estranged her heart; she was kinswoman to Lord *Eldred*, that hoary traitor whose envious arts had betrayed to King *Ed-*

gar, the fraud which his violent love had led the unfortunate *Athelwold* to commit;—and who had enjoyed all his dignities and possessions to the present day. Heaven had denied him heirs to this ill-gotten wealth, though he had twice married.

“ From the time that *Ethelred* became King, he endeavoured to gain the same influence as he possessed during the reign of *Edgar*;—but Earl *Edgar*, allied to the royal family, and who had been foremost in placing the crown on the head of *Ethelred*, after the death of young *Edgar*, during the first years of his reign, kept *Eldred* at a distance; and, by his own influence with the King, prevented his having any:—but, after the marriage of *Elgiva*, which disgusted *Edgar* at first, who paid not so early court to her as *Eldred* did; that lord left none of those refined arts he knew so well to practise, untried to gain what she had been so long watching for in vain. Insensibly he gained so much on the mind of *Ethelred*, as to equal *Alwin* in his favour.”

“ This wily lord well knew three such characters as *Elgiva*, *Edgar*, and *Alwin*, would ever keep him at a distance, and lessen that power which he had exercised too long and haughtily, to resign patiently:—as he was well versed in the movements of the heart, he saw, before he was sensible of it himself, the wane of *Ethelred*’s love.” Here the voice of the

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the pilgrim faltered, and after some moments' silence, he raised his eyes mournfully from the ground, and looking up to heaven, "O God!" he said, "who, for reasons known to thyself, but hid from me, hast sent a wretch into this world, to which I stand linked by no tie; a blank, a burthen to that world and to myself; for what am I reserved! pardon, Father, this impatience:—but I am now come to the unfortunate period of my birth, and it awakes a sad remembrance of the past, and sadder fears of what may yet be my fate. *Eldred*,——Oh! that in painting such a wretch, I should be forced to confess at the same time, an alliance to him!—*Eldred*, I say, did not lose a moment to take his advantage of the first marks of *Ethelred's* decrease of affection. He had a young kinswoman left to his care, nobly born, and heiress to large domains; she became by the death of her father the Earl of *Cornwall*, subject to his controul: he had placed the young *Matilda*, who lost both her parents in her infancy, in a convent: she was beauteous as the morn in the vernal months, when all things bloom and wear a look of gaiety; the birds in that season of love caroled not blyther notes than she, poor, artless, unthinking maiden! Her wily kinsman had taken the utmost care to have her taught all those courtly accomplishments fit only to fascinate the youthful heart, and lead it astray from virtue; while
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her mind was neglected; for the sisterhood where she resided, were informed she was to shine at court, and directed not to taint her with melancholy, rigid maxims; but lest she might acquire a way of thinking, amongst those good maidens, contrary to his intentions; *Eldred* took her from the convent, e'er she had completed her sixteenth year, and brought her to his house in *London*.

“ The glossy plume of the raven was not of a more shining black than her hair, which fell in waving ringlets down her back; and her eyes, of the same hue, sparkled with the diamond's lustre; her beauty differed from that of *Elgiva*; of equal fairness, the blossom of the wilding was not more blooming than her complexion; her features and her whole form were lovely, and animated by a sprightliness and grace, taught by her breeding and high birth; without any assuming or haughty airs, she seemed not unconscious of her merit, or of the homage all were ready to render her charms as their due. As Lord *Eldred* was without children, the lady *Matilda* was considered as heiress to his great possessions; and at most of the entertainments which he made for the King, his fair young kinswoman was present. *Ethelred* soon felt the force of her charms, and quite enchanted by those alluring graces she was taught to display, her gay humour amused him; he omitted no arts to gain her young and unsuspecting heart,
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and succeeded easily, as she had been instructed by *Eldred* to intrap him, if possible. He knew, base as he was, the King could not espouse her; but, if he would make her his favourite mistress, ways might be found to remove the sons of *Elgiva*; when, in a moment of intoxication, she might prevail on him to place the crown on her head, should *Elgiva* die.

“The young *Matilda* neither meaning nor suspecting evil; looked no further than to the glory (as she was taught to deem it) of holding her King in her chains, without foreseeing the fetters that were ready to enslave herself; a net in which she was soon entangled. *Ethelred*’s passion for this young beauty was even more violent than the one he had felt for *Elgiva*; and for some months he seldom stirred from her apartments: the days were passed in feasting, the nights in balls and masqueing; minstrelsy and mirth echoed thro’ the palace. *Matilda*, as *Elgiva* had done, delivered herself up to the violence of her passion, vainly flattering herself that those charms which her lover had sworn he could not live without, would keep him hers for ever. Foolish thought!—as well might she hope to realize the pleasing delusion of her dream, or fix the fleeting colours of the rainbow; as the affections of a heart which like wax, was ready to receive any impression.

“E’er

“ E’er a year ended, *Matilda* had a son :— Would he had never seen the light ! He was named *Edwy*, and has been relating things to you that have occasioned his own sad fortune; and much woe to *England*. Having once quitted the paths of honour and rectitude, *Ethelred* pursued only those of indolence and pleasure; the latter wholly employed his thoughts : he floated on the tide of life without other direction than what he received from the current of his own passions. Fatal guides to those who surrender themselves up to their tyrannic dominion ! for, from the moment the King of *England* gave the reins to his, that peace and quiet prosperity, in which his father had left the realm, vanished ; and all the miseries of war, anarchy and confusion succeeded.

“ Scarce had I attained my second year, when my mother shared the same fate of her whom she had supplanted. When she perceived a change in the King’s affection, she strove by means that seldom succeed, to regain it :—tears, caresses, reproaches, by turns were tried in vain : his feeble heart had received a new impression, which not only effaced the one she had made, but added to his regret for having given his hand to *Elgiva* !

“ The commerce between the cities of *London* and *Rouen*, brought many *Norman* merchants to *England* ; and from them the fame of the Princess *Emma*’s charms (who was still
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ed the pearl of *Normandy*) was spread thro' the realm: she was sister to *Richard* the Second, duke of that duchy. The report of her beauty at last reached *Ethelred*, and the sight of the *Norman* Princess's portrait, which he found means to procure, completed his conquest, and redoubled his regret for his too hasty engagement: he grew mindless and melancholy; and shut up in his closet, spent whole days contemplating this picture. The news was soon carried to *Elgiva*, who saw in this new passion the loss of all her hopes: she sunk beneath the blow: a return of her distemper was the consequence—sure means to put a period to her woes;—and she soon sunk under the pressure of a burning fever and a broken heart. A few hours before her death, she desired to see Earl *Edgar*: as he drew near her couch, she held out her hand, cold with the approach of death, and with a voice broken and faint, entreated he would never abandon her helpless infants; she then gave him a letter for the King, and soon after expired, resigned to her fate, which too late she was sensible she merited. For, though she made no ill use of her power, she suffered her love for the King and her children to engross her wholly; nor had she a thought that did not centre in them. Intoxicated by her passion for her spouse, her hopes of happiness were placed in him; and she forgot her dependance on the power who had raised

raised her to the height of her wishes, who alone could make happiness permanent, or deprive her of it in a moment. Disgust of an uncertain world, and sorrow for the loss of her friend, determined *Birtha* to retire to a cloister, where (having seen the last duties paid to her remains in the church belonging to it) she for ever shut herself, and e'er her year of probation was expired, took the veil; and soon within the same holy walls, did *Mattilda* seek a refuge from the neglect of *Ethelred*, and the taunts and scorn of the world. As her reign had been too short to answer any of *Eldred's* purposes, he encouraged her design to end her days in a convent. Had she shewed any inclination to remain in the world, he would have been the first to spurn her from society; and on the day that she sent for him, to impart her resolve, he went to her apartment determined to say, "Get thee to a nunnery, and there hide thy shame!" but her first words shewing her design, changed his; he hid his satisfaction under a face and complexion of concern. She entreated his continued care of the large possessions left by her father for her son; lest the King, withdrawing his affections from the child, as he had done from the mother, might abandon him. She took with her all her jewels; and Lord *Eldred*, rejoicing to be rid of one whose ruin and disgrace he was conscious he had occasioned, largely endowed the convent to which she retired.

tired. As she feared leaving me a prey to neglect, if deprived of a mother's care, she obtained by her liberality to the altar, leave to have me a few years with her in the convent, until I was of an age to send me to the King, or to the care of Lord *Eldred*. The sadness of *Matilda's* mind finding more relief from the tender melancholy of *Birtha's* humour, than she found in the society of the other sisters, an intimacy soon grew between them; and from listening to their converse, as I grew older, I gathered the particulars I have related, and many which I have to relate.

“ When Lord *Edgar* returned to court, after the death of *Elgiva*, he presented her letter to the King, who threw it carelessly into a cabinet that stood open, not once inquiring about the unhappy writer, and began to talk of indifferent things. *Edgar* was shocked at this cruel indifference; and, answering with boldness the questions of *Ethelred*, he left the closet and sought out *Alwin*, to lament with him the death of *Elgiva*, whose mild virtues might in time have reclaimed her Lord.— Meanwhile the King, rejoiced to find himself free, sent a splendid embassy to demand the Princess *Emma* in marriage. His ambassadors received from the Duke of *Normandy* an honourable reception; their suit was accepted, and the Princess was soon conducted to *England*, and the nuptials solemnized with great pomp; but by *Matilda* and *Birtha* (one fearing for

me, the other for the children of her friend, they knew not what of ill from these nuptials) they were celebrated by floods of tears. Thus a few years saw *Ethelred* the slave of three violent passions; but from the day that, influenced by *Eldred*, he forgot his vows to *Elgiva*, and betrayed the unsuspecting innocence of *Matilda*, a total change appeared in his disposition; and the sight of his offspring became hateful to him. But *Edgar* faithfully performed his promise to the dying *Elgiva*; and her children had all due care and attendance; and to his pity also was I indebted, for the little notice of the King. For a few years *Matilda* dragged on a life of sorrow in the convent; but finding her death approach, she had me brought to her bed-side, and putting me into the arms of *Birtha*, entreated she would take me under her protection until I was of an age to claim my right of her rich inheritance; for, as *Eldred* had entirely neglected her since she quitted the world, she feared to trust me to his care. Here her tears interrupted her speech, and she held me to her bosom in an agony of passion; her grief, her youth blasted by sickness, and by one false step deprived of the advantages of her high descent and grand possessions; filled the gentle heart of *Birtha* with pity, and she vowed herself as much my friend as her limited situation would allow. While she was yet speaking, a nun informed her, Lord *Edgar*

gar waited for her at the gate: She arose from the couch on which *Matilda* reclined, bidding her have comfort, and consider this visit as a happy omen; went down to the Earl. After hearing from him of the welfare of those dear children, for whom she was so interested, she made him acquainted with my hapless fate, about to be deprived of the only being on earth attached to me, herself excepted; and she pleaded so powerfully in my favour, that *Edgar* desired to see me. This kind-hearted maiden hastened to lead me to his presence. My resemblance to the King struck him, and young as I was, his words made an impression that has never been effaced: "Unhappy child," he said, "thou resemblest thy father; mayest thou not do so in thy actions which thou art called upon to guard with double strictness, lest thou provoke heaven to visit on thy head the errors of thy parents; thou art of the antient royal Saxon blood, and allied to that which fills these veins, nor will I ever forsake thee." This promise, faithfully reported by the kind-hearted *Birtha*, gave peace in her last moments to *Matilda*. Those moments now drew to an end, and once more calling *Birtha* to the side of her couch, she gave to her care a small casket containing her most valuable jewels, with a miniature picture of *Ethelred* and herself; and, entreating she would keep them for me, expired, and left her wretched

offspring to struggle alone with the evils she had entailed on him.

“ When Earl *Edgar* was informed of *Matilda*’s death, he took me from the convent, and placed me (though not immediately) in the house with *Elgiva*’s children; but appointing proper attendants, sent me to the care of an abbot who had it in charge to instruct me in all things I was of an age to learn. Mean time *Ethelred*’s love for his fair queen, exceeded what he had felt for *Elgiva* or *Matilda*. While in the court of her brother, *Emma* had been called the pearl of *Normandy*; and the fond passion of her lord, made him stile her the jewel of *Albion*. From her birth she inherited a high spirit; but she also possessed many gentler virtues. She had already brought the King two sons; the elder was named *Alfred*, the younger *Edward*, and to these children he transferred all the affection he ever felt for those left him by *Elgiva*, or for myself. One day, as he was alone in his closet, culling some jewels to have new set for the queen; in a drawer he found unopened, the letter of *Elgiva*, given him by *Edgar* on the day of her death:— A sudden emotion made him break the seal; but the first lines filled him with the most tender pity, which every line he read, encreased. Not a reproach—not a bitter expression met his eyes; she only entreated that the hatred and contempt she had incurred, might not be extended to her children, who
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ought to lose all that might be ascribed to them from her birth, in the glory of being his; the letter concluded with the most fervent wishes for his happiness with her whom death was going to leave him at liberty to espouse; and she wished her superior worth might hold his affections longer than she had done. The soul of *Ethelred* was melted at reading this letter; his eyes overflowed with tears, and he was so absorbed by the emotion it inspired, that he heard not the queen, who had entered the closet; and seeing him so deeply engaged, leaned over his chair, and read the letter which lay open before him: her sobs, which she could not suppress as she read the conclusion, roused *Ethelred*, who turning, saw her bathed in tears;—a mother herself, her heart was filled with compassion for the ill-fated *Elgiva* and her orphan children: the mind of *Ethelred* too was softened; he listened benignly to her pleading in favour of his hitherto neglected offspring; and consented to recal them to court, and have them brought up with the children of queen *Emma*.

“*Edgar*, who saw this change in the heart of *Ethelred* with pleasure, generously tried to awaken some thought of me in his heart; but he desired the Earl would continue his care of me some time longer, as he deemed it not right to fill the palace with all his offspring; he however desired to see me, and was struck, and even appeared pleased with that resemblance

blance to himself which every one observed who saw me. From that time I was brought up in the apartments, and instructed by the masters of *Elgiva's* children, who now resided in the palace, and by the goodness of *Edgar*, sometimes saw the King.

“ The realm was now in profound peace, and *Ethelred* relying on the smiles of fortune, lived a life of indolence and pleasure ; when at once, a storm broke over his head that put an end to all his tranquillity, and threatened the destruction of the kingdom. Expresses arrived from different ports with the fearful tidings, that two large fleets from *Denmark* and *Norway*, were ready to disembark. These were followed by others which confirmed the report, and added, that a numerous army had landed and were beginning their devastation with fire and sword, and threatened to overrun the land. Every hour brought fresh and sadder accounts than the last, describing the ravages of these lawless invaders ; exceeding the miseries that *England* had ever been exposed to from the cruelty and rapine of the Danes. The court, the whole kingdom, was filled with dismay and consternation ; the nobles flocked to the capital ; but the King unused to war, to which he had not been trained, and surrounded with ministers as much softened by a life of indolence and peace as himself ; who preferred the soft pleatings of the lute, the noon-day feast, the evening carousal

rousal, and the midnight masque, to the stern alarm of war;—agreed to send deputies with offers of peace; offers, at once shameful and destructive. Instead of levying an army to drive these Pagans from his kingdom, *Ethelred* offered, on condition they ceased their hostilities, to pay them a yearly tribute.

“ The Kings of *Denmark* and *Norway*, who commanded their troops in person, readily agreed to the treaty which secured to them a large sum for the present; and obliged *Ethelred* to tax all his subjects to prevent these spoilers from laying waste the whole realm.— This treaty also gave them a pretence to return every year, and enforce the tax with fire and sword, if not got ready on demand. The weak and unfortunate *Ethelred*, on whom was bestowed the title of *Unready*, by subjects as indolent as himself—Alas! that in speaking of him who gave me being, I am forced to use such language!—But when he had, by submitting to the tax, obtained such precarious safety;—*Sweyn*, the Danish Prince, ceased hostilities and departed. *Olaus*, the Norwegian King who had landed, and continued to make his abode at *Southampton*, determined to pay *Ethelred* a visit before his departure. His reception was splendid; and the King of *England*, with his nobles, were glad of an excuse to renew that festive life the arrival of the Danes had interrupted. Each day was varied by some amusement unknown to the savage manners

manners of *Norway*. *Olaus* was a Prince capable of improvement ;—struck by the religious ceremonies at which he was sometimes present, he attended them more closely ; and *Ethelred*, who saw his natural fierceness softened whenever he was present at the holy rites, omitted nothing to convert him to the true faith ;—he offered him the instruction of those well versed in holy lore, to enlighten his mind, and who soon made a convert of him :—he was baptized, and *Ethelred* answered for him at the font, where he bound himself by the most solemn vows, never to invade that land, where he had been made the servant of the Saviour of mankind. After his baptism he departed for *Norway*, and religiously performed his vow.—Happy would it have been for *England*, had *Sweyn* also renounced Paganism !—At his departure he left a fleet to awe the people, and oblige *Ethelred* to perform the treaty ; and on the least delay, the Danes had orders to renew their ravages with redoubled barbarity.

“ I was now come to an age to feel for the miseries of my country ; though amidst all the tumults that disturbed its tranquillity, I had hitherto lived in peaceful security at one of *Earl Edgar*’s castles. But the time was come when I was to lose that good, that only friend ! Since the shameful truce had been made with the Danes, he drooped, and at last sunk under the grief of seeing his country enslaved.

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When he found his last hour approach, he sent for Earl *Goodwin*, one of his friends, and entreated him by their former amity, that he would be the guardian of my youth, and remind the King (with whom he stood high in favour) of what was due to one who owed his birth to him; "but knowing *Ethelred* as I do," went on the Earl, "I rely less on his protection than on your good offices;—exert them, my good Lord, in favour of this poor youth;—at least exhort the King to force from the gripe of *Eldred*, his rightful inheritance."—He was proceeding when, quite spent by the efforts he had made, he sunk breathless on his couch, and expired in a few moments. My grief at first, was for his loss alone; I was indifferent to what concerned myself, and was roused from this gloomy sorrow by my removal to the castle of *Goodwin*, and seeing my masters and attendants dismissed; and that I was to have only those who had the care of Earl *Goodwin*'s sons. My eyes at once opened to my situation, and I felt all the horrors of it.—Neglected by him who gave me birth; deprived of every friend by the death of *Edgar*; thrown into the power, rather than under the protection, of Lord *Goodwin*, who paid me little attention; forced to bear with the turbulent and haughty manners of his sons; I had no resource but in shunning the amusements in which they were indulged by those who had the care of their education;

education; by this I avoided much insult and neglect, and applying myself to learn those accomplishments which I hoped would obtain the respect due to my birth, distinguish me, and force the King to do so too. Amongst those who instructed the sons of Earl *Goodwin*, was the Prior of a neighbouring abbey, well versed in all learned and holy lore; with him I spent those hours which the young lords dedicated to their sports; he saw my inclination to be instructed in letters, and encouraged it; and to his care I am indebted for all the advantages I have derived from them; by them I am taught, and enabled to bear up under the neglect of mankind, and the disappointments of life.

“ The three younger sons of Lord *Goodwin*; *Gurth*, *Sweyn*, and *Lewin*; were those whom the Prior warned me to shun; he shewed me the danger my principles as well as my personal safety ran, in associating with them. The eldest son, Lord *Harold*, was of a better disposition, and of gentler manners; but he resided at the court, and little at *Goodwin* castle. Living in solitude, (tho’ in a place crowded with the neighbouring youth, who came to pay court to the sons of the Earl, and to share their instructions or sports;) I learned to reflect more than is usual at my age;—but what did it profit me!—driven from society by the scornful or licentious manners of my young companions, who considered me as a dependant

dant on Lord *Goodwin*'s bounty. I carried the most gloomy thoughts into my retirement, which either saddened or prevented my tasting any pleasure, but what my studies afforded; and they indeed oft have afforded me a refuge from the evils which my foreboding heart presaged; yet I have lived to see what threatened my youth, befall my riper years. A year passed away in this manner, when on the return of Lord *Goodwin* from court, I saw myself treated with unusual kindness; the King had expressed his satisfaction at taking me under his care, and talked of his intentions in my favour.

“ Lord *Goodwin* had a niece who was committed by a dying sister to his care. The young *Ethelgiva* was about my own age; her face was beautiful, and her manners mild and gentle. To this young maid the Earl proposed to espouse me, when of riper age; and the King to whom he hinted this wish, was well pleased, and promised when our nuptials were completed, to add considerably to those possessions in the care of Lord *Eldred*, which were my right. I was now often admitted to the apartments of *Ethelgiva* and the young *Editha*, a lovely child, and the only daughter of the Earl, and my days passed in more tranquillity; yet a desire of improvement and instruction employed my thoughts, and left no place for love in my heart. What it felt for *Ethelgiva* was devoid of passion; her mild
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and gentle virtues excited my affection, but it resembled more the affection of a brother than that irresistible passion which inclines, or rather impels instantaneously the heart to attach itself in spite of numberless obstacles; and I felt as much pleasure in sharing the infantine sports of the young *Editha*, as in conversing with her kinswoman. But these days of peace and tranquillity, few as they were, drew to an end; and I felt, in common with all attached to the King, the sad state to which he was reduced—weak, timorous, unlike his brave ancestors, whose courage and fortitude redoubled in the hour of danger. To soften and satisfy the rapacity of the Danes, he increased the taxes already imposed on his people; it was called *Danes-Geld*, and they agreed to withdraw their fleet; but many of them preferring the fertile and beautiful isle of *Britain*, to their own desert and barren country, remained and settled in it, and treated the wretched inhabitants with such insolence and cruelty, as made them toil incessantly to pay the tax; while their tyrannic masters lived in idleness, and were stiled Lord Danes by the servile subjects of a timid Prince. “But what (asked the hermit) became of that fire, that steady courage, which was wont to distinguish the Saxons?”—“By I know not what fate; (continued Edwy) it seemed at this time totally extinguished or deadened by long peace, and the example of their Prince: yet naturally

naturally indolent as *Ethelred* was, the insolent barbarities of the Danes roused him at last; and he determined to revenge his people, and rid the kingdom of them at once.

“ He sent orders secretly throughout the realm, and so well were they executed, that in one day, the Danes without distinction of age or sex, were slain with a barbarity which indeed emulated their own. *Ethelred* hoped by this conduct to terrify *Sweyn* from ever invading *England* more; or should the desire of revenge again bring those fell invaders, he hoped for the assistance of the Duke of *Normandy*; and that his subjects would shed the last drop of their blood, rather than fall into the power of barbarians whom now they had so lately provoked. “ Detestable policy!”—exclaimed the Hermit, “ could the King of *England* hope for ought but the abhorrence
“ of all the world for such cruelty; and that
“ it would not draw down on his realm the
“ wrath of heaven!” *Edwy* paused, and the hermit to re-assure him, said,—“ My son,
“ lose not thy confidence in heaven;—thou
“ wert innocent of the cruelty of thy fire,
“ who stained his hands, and those of his people, with murder, to avoid the trouble or
“ the perils of war; and if heaven incensed,
“ has sent down calamities on your country,
“ in which you are involved; yet to you they
“ may not be the marks of its wrath. The
“ task is a hard one, yet learn it, my son;—

“ look on the evils and disappointments that
“ have been allotted thee, rather as trials of
“ thy patience and fortitude, than as marks of
“ heaven’s wrath,—if thou art not conscious
“ of having provoked them; bear then with
“ the correcting hand of him who can save thee
“ from the most threatening evil, or turn it into
“ a benefit: nor let the calamities of thy country
“ too much afflict thee; perhaps in its wisdom,
“ Heaven has sent those Pagan ravagers to
“ awake it from that worse than *Lydian* soft-
“ ness, into which thy countrymen, under
“ the indolent and luxurious reign of *Ethel-*
“ *red*, would have sunk. The taxes of the
“ Danes roused and inspired industry; and
“ though that spirit to throw off the yoke they
“ imposed, was suffered to degenerate into
“ fell and treacherous revenge, unbecoming
“ in a Christian Prince—unbecoming your
“ brave countrymen, yet the past will teach
“ them to doubt, to be more guarded, and
“ better provided against the invasion of the
“ Danes in future.—But I interrupt thee; go
“ on, my son, and explain why I see thee in
“ this present garb, and what has since befall-
“ len thy country ”

“ Edwy, who had listened in silence
to the comfort the hermit endeavoured to give
him, resumed his narrative, yet sighing at the
recollection of the past, and at the prospect of
what seemed to threaten him in future.

EDWY:

AN HISTORIC TALE.

BOOK IV.

“THE report of the massacre was brought to *Denmark* by a small number of Danes who had been fishing, and seeing the slaughter of some of their countrymen on the shore as they were about to land, and from their outcries learning what had happened, they again put to sea, and after suffering incredible hardships, arrived in their own country. Animated with fury for the slaughter of his subjects, *Sweyn* prepared to revenge them: He got together a numerous army, set sail, and arrived in *England*, not to plunder, but lay waste the whole country. He soon overrun *Northumberland*, *East Anglia*, and all that part of the kingdom; and at length laid siege to *London*, where *Ethelred* had shut himself up. *Sweyn* supposed that city would sub-

mit as all other places had done; but he found the gates shut, and the walls well defended. He would not waste his time in a tedious siege, but turned off to *Wessex*, where all fled at his approach. He returned to *London*, and determined on its destruction, and on sacrificing to his fury the whole family of *Ethelred*, and all who should oppose him; but the citizens prevented the dire effects of his rage by setting open their gates.

“ Alas! (interrupted the hermit) what became of *Ethelred*, or how escaped he the furious Dane? I ever thought an unshaken loyalty to their King amongst the first virtues of your countrymen.” Nor did they now betray him; (continued Edwy) for, dreading to fall into the hands of the Danes, and seeing no other way to avoid threatened danger, he left his palace, when midnight had involved the city in darkness; and with all his family, except myself, went on board a bark, and retired to *Normandy*.

“ The Londoners seeing themselves deserted by their King, and the rest of the island subject to the Dane, submitted also. He was proclaimed King of *England*, none daring to oppose him. His reign was short, not quite a year; and from the manner of his death, all pronounced it one of those judgments heaven oft sends upon the wicked. But to explain this seeming miracle, I must take a retrospect.

“ Before

“ Before *England* was united under one monarch, and in the reign of *Osbert*, King of *Northumberland*, the Danes who had committed terrible ravages, were expelled by the valour of several neighbouring princes, who united to drive hence those fell invaders; and *Osbert* would have reigned in peace and safety, could he have subdued his own unruly passions.

“ One day, fatal to all *England*, as he returned from the chace to the city of *York*, where he kept his court; he stopped to refresh himself after the fatigue of the day, at the castle of Earl *Bruen*, guardian of the coast against the invasion of the Danes. The Earl was absent; but *Wilfrida* his Countess, a young and lovely lady, received the King, and busied herself to entertain her royal guest. In the absence of her Lord she presided at the banquet, and exerted herself to render it agreeable;—she succeeded but too well;—*Osbert* charmed with her beauty, prolonged the feast that he might the longer gaze on her charms. He drank repeated goblets to her health; and now warmed with wine, he forgot the rights of hospitality and honour;—he arose as if to depart;—seeming to recollect somewhat of importance, he wished to communicate it to the Countess as her Lord was absent, to whom she was to repeat it on his return;—he desired to attend her to another apartment. Innocent herself, and suspecting

no evil, *Wilfrida* led the way to her closet; at the further end of a gallery arrived, *Osbert* lost no time, but at once declared his criminal passion to the Countess, represented its violence; and finding neither flattery, promises, nor threats, could prevail on the astonished and incensed *Wilfrida*, he proceeded to the most brutal force; and fearing her continued outcries might alarm and bring some one to her aid, he hastily quitted the closet; and ordering his train to horse, left the castle, and returned to *York*. The wretched victim of his brutal passion flew, like another *Lucretia*, to her chamber, where (shutting out the light of the sun) she remained until the arrival of her Lord. Rendered desperate by grief and shame, she concealed not the treatment she had received. The Earl, enraged to madness, flew to the coast, and with a few friends going on board a bark, set sail for *Denmark*, where they soon arrived; and hastening to court, complained loudly of the outrage committed by *Osbert*, and offered with all his powers to assist *Iver*, the Danish Prince, to dethrone him, and obtain for himself the kingdom of *Deira*. The King of *Denmark* who had other motives than aiding Earl *Bruen*'s revenge, accepted joyfully his offers, and made instant preparation to accompany him to *England*. A numerous fleet well manned, was soon ready.—They set sail with prosperous gales, and entered the *Humber* without opposition; and before the
English

English recovered from their first astonishment, they disembarked, and in their tumultuous, rapid manner, marched towards *York*.

“ *Osbert* terrified, and conscious he had brought those impending evils on his country, tried to levy some forces to repulse the invaders ; but the wrongs he had done *Earl Bruen*, the most powerful amongst his nobles, had alienated the hearts of his people, and many of them refused to take up arms in his defence, or fight against the husband and brother of *Wilfrida*, who were known to be in the Danish camp. They supposed that by deserting a Prince they no longer deemed worthy to reign over them, they should secure the friendship of the Danish Prince, who only came, as they imagined, to redress the wrongs of *Earl Bruen*. Tortured by guilt, terror, and shame, *Osbert* left *York* with the few forces he had hastily raised ; desperate and determined on death or victory, he denounced on his subjects and allies the ruin that soon befel them, for so tardily assisting the common cause, and refusing to repel those savage invaders.

“ Arrived at the place where the Danes had encamped, he rushed on so impetuously as to throw them into some confusion ; but the sight of the furious and injured husband of *Wilfrida*, who sought him every where, soon appalled his courage ; he turned from him, and went in pursuit of the Danish King ; but before he reached the spot where *Iver* fought, (which

was

was easily distinguished by the dread inspiring standard, on which was depicted the ominous Raven,*) he was surrounded by a troop of Danes, and though he made a desperate defence, less to save his life than to sell it dearly, he fell pierced by a thousand wounds.—The death of *Osbert* threw the English into dismay; they cast down their arms, and submitted to the conqueror, who conducted by Earl *Bruen*, hastened to *York*, which threw open its gates at his approach. He took quiet possession of the palace, and having rested a few days, he was without opposition crowned King of *Deira* in the room of *Osbert*.

“Alas!” said the hermit, “how many
“evils did the unruly passions of one man,
“and the vanity of one woman, occasion!—
“What had the wife of *Bruen* to do with the
“entertainment of the King, in the absence of
“her Lord?—or why should she desire to display
“her charms to any eyes but his?—So
“acted *Lucretia* of old; and *Osbert* but followed
“the example of *Tarquin*; and both
“caused a deluge of the best blood in the land
“to flow.” “Although Christianity prevented
Wilfrida,” resumed *Edwy*, “from acting
as the Roman matron did, or wiping

* The *Danish* standard was wrought by the hands of *Iwer's* sisters, who ('twas said) mixt witcheries or devilish rites, with the work; and these Pagans, by the power of fancy, imagined that the Raven clapt its wings in token of victory; and hung its head as a sign of defeat.

out the stain cast on her honour with her own blood, she bore it not less heavily; and on the departure of her Lord for *Denmark*, she shut herself up from the sight or converse of her kindred and friends, in the convent of *Coldingham*;—nor could the entreaties of Earl *Bruen*, on his return, prevail on her to leave it.

“ The easy victory gained over the English by the Danish Prince, neither satisfied his ambition nor his vengeance; he again put himself at the head of his army, and marching through *Mercia* and *Northumberland*, like a whirlwind he carried destruction wherever he came; plundering without distinction, castles, convents, and abbeys. Earl *Bruen* too late, saw the miseries that blind revenge had brought on his country; he carried his infant son, and most valuable effects, and leaving them in the convent where the Countess had taken refuge, he gave his castle in charge to some trusty domestics, and repaired to *York* to prevent those Danes who did not accompany *Iver*, from plundering his vassals, or laying waste his domains; but his presence deterred not those brutal and rapacious robbers, who overran the land like a cruel plague. The convents and abbeys, where the English hoped to secure their effects, their women, and their infants, were sacked and set on fire; nor were even their holy relics spared or respected. A band of those ravagers approached the abbey
of

of *Coldingham*, as the sisterhood in procession, were offering up their devout supplications for deliverance; the unfortunate, but innocent cause of all their ruin, with her female attendants, accompanied them. As they entered the cloisters of the great church, a loud and confused noise struck their ears; breathless and mute, they waited to hear the cause of this uproar.

“ A nun who remained in her cell, at the gate of the outward court, looked through a small opening, and saw a band of those fierce and cruel spoilers coming on like an overwhelming torrent; terrified she ran to give notice to the sisters, who starting from their knees, on which they had fallen at the first alarm, and wild with their fears, they crowded round the abbess for advice and instruction. Young, beautiful, and helpless as themselves, what could she do for them or for herself?—The tumult and uproar approached nearer:—Alas! mother, cried out *Wilfrida*, there is no resource, no refuge left us but in death!—If my honour was not secure from the violence of a Christian Prince, what have we not to fear from these brutal Pagans?—let us then fly to death e’er they are here to prevent us; and surely heaven will not account our preferring death to dishonour, as a crime; nor reject that supplication for mercy, which our last breath shall utter.” “ Not so, my daughter,” said the abbess with an assured and

and steady voice, "shall we dare to rush, without his permission, into the presence of our God!—how!" cried out the nuns and *Wilfrida*, "shall we quietly, wait here the outrages of the Danes, and even suffer their brutality at the foot of the altar?—Alas! alas! mother, consider!"—"Hear me, my dear sisters," calmly answered the heroic dame, "I mean not so; but I have somewhat to propose; yet it may be you will deem it even worse than death itself; but I will set you an example:—if you follow it, you must be speedy, for the danger approaches; a moment of delay may be fatal."—The shouts of the Danes, who were forcing the gates, made these terrified women start from their knees; while their superior, drawing a knife from under her garment, and looking up to heaven, which she supplicated for resolution for a moment, deliberately cut off her upper lip and her nose; and presenting the bloody knife to the nun who stood next her, "at least," she said, "our hideous figure will disgust, rather than inflame, our brutal invaders; and death, the worst we have now to fear, is better from their hands than from our own." All beheld her with mute amazement;—some with terror;—with horror some:—others remained stupified by their danger, and the dreadful and only resource left them. But *Wilfrida* hating life and the fatal beauty which had been the original cause
of

of all these woes, catching up the knife yet reeking with the blood of the abbess, was going to follow her example, when one of her attendants entered trembling, with her young son in her arms; she clasped him for a moment in her's, and holding him to her bosom, "if thou diest with me now," she said, "thou wilt escape the shame of knowing it was the dishonour suffered by thy mother, that occasioned these miseries." She directed the attendant to retire behind the altar, and wait the end of this dreadful scene; and again seizing the knife, she disfigured that face which had been the cause of all this outrage to herself and her country.—Her companions followed quickly the example set by her and the abbess; and before the Danes had got entrance, these heroic women completed their sacrifice, and ranged round the altar, with their hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, supplicated protection from the violence and brutality they dreaded worse than death.

"Meantime the Danes rushed through the great hall, regardless of the holy relics with which it was adorned; and unappalled by that religious inspiring gloom which lighted this spacious apartment through the high arched windows of stained glass, where the skilful hand of the artist had depicted the birth, the miracles, and sufferings of the Saviour of the world; and through which the evening sun now shed his beams, and illumined each bright tint;

tint;—but wholly intent on the spoils, and in eager search of the helpless inhabitants who, with the most horrid outcries, they swore by *Odin*, should not escape them, they rushed through the whole building; and finding the halls deserted, and the cells empty, they directed their hasty steps to the church, which stood open; on approaching the altar, mute surprise for a moment chilled their ardour, and astonished at the hideous figures that were presented to their view, they beheld in silence the bloody and disfigured faces of the nuns; but one bad passion abated:—these savage Danes were incapable of feeling a good or generous one;—they turned with horror from the spectacle before them, and retreating from the church, they closed the doors, and setting fire to the whole building in many places, they surrounded it at a distance until it was quite consumed with all its riches and inhabitants.

The Danish Prince who was present, and directed the destruction of *Coldingham*, not contented with his conquest of *Deira*, overran all *Northumberland*, and then directed his course to *East Anglia*; but it was less to subdue that country, than the destruction of *Edmund* its King, that drew him on with headlong fury; and he swore by his bracelets*,

* The most solemn oath amongst the Danes is by their bracelets or their arms.

(his wonted oath) that *Edmund* should not live to the end of the present moon, which had witnessed the burning of *Coldingham*, and the reduction of *Northumberland*.

“What wanton cruelty!” said the hermit; “but why was his wrath so hot against *Edmund*?”—“I will inform thee,” continued EDWY.

“Two years before Earl *Bruen* had conducted the Danes to the destruction of his country, *Lodobroe*, the father of *Iver*, was blown out to sea in a small bark, with two attendants only; he was in pursuit of a favourite hawk, when a sudden storm arising, the bark was driven on the coast of *East Anglia*. *Lodobroe* was saved by a fisherman, who conducted him to *Yarmouth*. He desired to be directed to the court of *Edmund*, and told those who enquired, that he was a Danish falconer;—as such he presented himself to the King, who took him into his service, and finding him expert at every sport, shewed him such favour, added to those his employment entitled him to*, as excited the envy and hatred of *Bern*, chief of his falconers. One day,

* The chief falconer had a right to the fourth place at the King's table; but was permitted to drink but three times, lest being intoxicated, he might neglect his hawks. When he was very successful at his sport, the King paid him the most distinguishing honours:—arose to receive him when he entered the hall; and on some occasions held his stirrup, to help him to alight from his horse.

HENRY'S History of England,
under

under pretence of shewing him some game, *Bern*, in whose breast deadly hatred rankled, on account of some recent honours shewn *Lodbroe* by the King, led him to a lonely and distant part of the forest, resolved to rid himself of so dangerous a rival.—As the Danish Prince was employed in bringing a hawk to the lure, *Bern*, with a club beat out his brains, and leaving him to be devoured by wolves, with which the forest abounded, returned to court. Two days passed, and *Edmund* uneasy at the absence of his favourite, gave orders to have him searched for, and questioned *Bern* concerning him; who answered, “My Lord knows thy servant is not his keeper:”—on being further questioned, he said, the Dane had accompanied him to the forest; but complaining of sudden illness, left him e’er they had sprung any game. Towards the close of that day, a dog who had accompanied *Lodbroe* from *Denmark*, came to the palace; he appeared half starved, and being fed, returned to the forest;—again appeared at court, and when fed, retreated to the wood. As the Dane was always followed by this dog, some of the servants of *Edmund* pursued him through the thickest and most remote parts of the forest; at last he stopped, and set up most doleful howlings. But what was their surprise, when they perceived the body of *Lodbroe* untouched by wild beasts! His faithful dog, ever watchful when at night

these creatures seek their food, had driven them from the body, which he never left, but when compelled by hunger to go in search of food;—it was conveyed by those men to court, where, in the excess of their grief for the loss of their Prince, the two Danes who had accompanied him, discovered his quality, and demanded justice and revenge. As *Bern* denied having any knowledge of his death, in the uncertainty of his guilt or innocence, the mild and equitable temper of *Edmund*, loth to doom him to death, condemned him to the trial of the watry ordeal. He was put into the bark that had brought over the Danes; without oars, sails, or provisions, and carried by the returning tide to sea; but this punishment not satisfying the two servants of the Danish King, they carried the news of his death to his sons, who vowed by *Odin*, to revenge it on the whole land;—but on *Edmund* and his domains, to wreak their severest vengeance. While *Iver* waited to collect an army, and to have himself crowned King of *Denmark*, Earl *Bruden* received that cruel outrage from *Osbert*, the Prince of *Deira*. He met at sea, the sport of every wind, the little bark in which *Bern* had been exposed; and pitying his forlorn state, he received him into his ship, and too much occupied by his own disgrace, made little enquiry into the cause of his being left to the mercy of the winds and waves. *Bern* made haste, on their arrival at *Denmark*, to reach the

the court before Earl *Bruen* arrived there, and related a plausible tale of the murder of the Danish King, by the command of *Edmund*; who, he said, had affected to consider him as the murderer, to screen himself from suspicion. The rage of *Iver*, which had begun to subside, was roused anew by this confirmation of the guilt of *Edmund* from the mouth of his own subject;—rejoiced at any pretence to invade *England*; he ordered speedy preparations, and before the English had notice of his intention, he arrived and carried destruction through their land.

Edmund had been educated by *Humbert*, Bishop of *Durham*, one of the most learned and pious men of the age. By the care of this holy man, the kingdom of *East Anglia* was free from those intestine broils that disturbed the other kingdoms of *Britain*, and was at perfect peace with them all when the news arrived of the ravages of the Danish King. Though better versed in acts of clemency and devotion, than in the exercise of arms, *Edmund* made haste to levy some troops, and putting himself at their head, prepared to give battle to the Danes; but unused to war, he was defeated, and forced to save himself by flight; his horse was disabled by a wound, and dropped under him;—a church at no great distance, promised him protection; he hastened to the altar; repeated shouts from the Danish army convinced him there was no

safety for him even within those holy walls; he looked through a window, and saw the Danish standard fluttering in the air, and the ominous raven seemingly clap its wings;—again he embraces the altar, but was soon dragged from his sanctuary by those bloody Pagans, and carried before their Prince, who tauntingly offered him his life, if he would do homage for his crown, and engage to pay him a large tribute. Disdaining life on such terms, *Edmund* refused; and *Iver*, enraged at the spirit with which he expressed himself, ordered some of his savage attendants to bind the unhappy Prince to a tree, and a number of his surest archers to let fly their arrows at once, which quickly put an end to his life; he then caused the head to be severed from the body, and nailed to the church door, and left the trunk to be devoured by the fowls of the air.

“ After the departure of the Danes, the monks of a neighbouring abbey took up the mangled body, and when darkness had covered all things, buried it in the church; and from his name, called it *St. Edmund's Bury*. It was long before the land was freed from these cruel spoilers; but when the Saxon race again recovered their former sovereignty, and peace was restored, each succeeding Prince richly endowed and beautified the church where the body of *Edmund* lay, who was deemed a martyr, and in time consecrated a saint.

saint. Rich by the offerings of so many Princes, the shrine of *St. Edmund*, became the most valuable; and the church the best adorned in all *England*. *Edgar*, the father of *Ethelred*, had given much treasure to it, and it grew still richer during the reign of *Edmund* the martyr; and by the donations of *Elfrida*, who hoped no doubt, to atone by her liberality those crimes her ambition had led her into." "Vain hope!" interrupted the hermit, "and fallacious as vain!—but go on, my son, and say why thou hast dwelt so much on the description of *St. Edmund's* shrine." "Thou mayest remember," went on the pilgrim, "I informed thee that *Sweyn*, the Danish Prince, who had wrested the kingdom from *Ethelred*, lost his life in this church; and that from the manner of his death, all deemed it a miracle. Whether he was ignorant that the English Prince was butchered by his countrymen, or that he desired to insult his throne, is uncertain; but while he directed his rapacious soldiers to strip the church of its rich ornaments, he leaned against the tomb of the saint, and was run through the throat with a lance, and expired without uttering a word, at the feet of *St. Edmund*, whose church he had given orders to prophane. The blow was given behind, and by an invisible hand; but it came from a mortal one, though undiscovered. *Alwin*, the faithful servant of *Ethelred*, had remained in *England* when his master fled;

fled ; watchful for any occasion to serve him, he had a kinswoman among the monks of *St. Edmund's Bury*, with whom he took refuge ; he was with one of those holy men at the altar, when *Sweyn* entered the church ; his lance lay against the tomb, on one side of which was a trap door that led down a flight of winding stairs to the vaulted cloisters of the church, so dark and intricate, that one unused to them, would be easily lost in their windings ; to this door, at the first appearance of the Danes, the timid monk retreated, and pressed *Alwin* to follow, who willing to see what this scene of tumult would end in, stayed a moment the trembling haste of his companion ; and as some ornamental part of the tomb sheltered them from view, only went within the trap door which he held in his hand. But who can paint the horror of the monk, when he saw the house of his God, and the shrine of the saint profaned, and about to be stript by sacrilegious hands !—A moment after *Sweyn* approached, and while he directed the pillage, leaned against the tomb ; his back was toward the trap door, which *Alwin* still held in his hand : animated by religious fury at what he saw, the monk suddenly passed him, and seizing the lance which lay near at hand, he deprived the Danish Prince of life by that blow which none attributed to a mortal hand.—Overjoyed at what he had done, the monk hastened within the trap, and with his companion

nion, retired in safety to the lower part of the church, from which, by various passages known only to themselves, they could easily escape in time of danger from discovery; but none was made; for even the Danes supposing the death of their Prince a miracle, desisted from the plunder, and hastily taking up the body, buried it, and proclaimed *Canute*, the son of *Sweyn*, King in his room.

“ The English raised from their depression by this seeming miracle in their favour, resolved to recal *Ethelred*; and *Alwin* was sent to inform him of the tyrant’s death. Afraid to trust himself in a country he had deserted, *Ethelred* sent over his elder son to judge by his reception, what his own might be. Young *Edmund* was received with joy, and *Alwin* once more crossed the sea to invite his master to put himself at the head of the English, who were every where assembling; he soon arrived, and their eagerness to throw off the Danish yoke, made his subjects joyfully flock round the standard of their rightful Prince, who soon saw himself at the head of a numerous army.

“ Though all the Danes were on the side of *Canute*, the suddenness of the revolt filled him with such amazement, as determined him not to hazard a battle; and instead of opposing *Ethelred*, he led his army to the sea side; but e’er he departed, left another proof of the savage manners so natural to his country, though

though he himself had renounced Paganism, and professed Christianity:—some English hostages remained in his power, and as he was embarking with his troops, he gave orders to cut off the hands and feet of those unfortunate men, innocent of any offence, and whom the day before he had treated with kindness;—in this mutilated condition he left them on the shore, and with his people set sail for *Denmark*. The wretched victims of his cruelty were found by some troops that had pursued the Danes to the sea shore, and were presented to *Ethelred* a few days after; forgetting that he himself set the example, when he massacred such numbers of Danes before his departure from *Normandy*, he vowed vengeance against the whole race; and in his first fury, doomed to death all who had not accompanied *Canute*: amongst the latter, was *Morcar* and *Sifreth*, two powerful lords, who had connected themselves with *England* by marrying the daughters of one of its nobles. He seized on their estates, and shut up *Algitha*, widow to *Sifreth*, in a nunnery her life was preserved by two soldiers who had been vassals to her father;—they conveyed her to a lonely cottage, where (trembling with apprehension of worse than death) she remained a few hours; but was soon discovered by a straggling band of those lawful plunderers which the horrors of war let loose to despoil all who fall in their way: stripped already of all that was valuable, by those who

who had before her eyes butchered her husband and her infant, they saw no advantage in taking away her life in cold blood; but hoping a reward for delivering her up to the fury of the King, they listened to the two soldiers, and saved her from their brutality; she was dragged from her concealment, and hurried to a castle not far distant, where *Ethelred* reposed after the fatigue of his voyage:—her distress, which heightened her beauty, disarmed part of his rage, and he changed the sentence of her death to ending her days in a convent. Happy to escape from the violence she dreaded, the unfortunate *Algitha* received her sentence with a sort of gloomy satisfaction: her native land was now to her a desert; her parents were long since dead; her noble spouse and two of her brothers slain; her infant son dashed on the pavement before her eyes—a convent appeared the only asylum from the calamities that had overwhelmed her house:—she resembled a trembling, unresenting victim, that suffers itself to be led to the sacrifice, knowing that resistance and prayers are alike vain.

“ The abbess received her at the command of the King, rather as a victim doomed to perpetual imprisonment, than as one of the sisterhood. No gifts to the altar—no donations to the house, demanded, or secured for her a welcome reception; her misfortunes moved but little pity; she was doomed to be one of the inferior

inferior nuns who attend the sick; and a day for her taking the vows was fixed; a cell and the habit of her order were assigned her, and little respect paid to her former high estate or late losses; the bell summoned her to the stated devotion of the house, which she was obliged to attend; and while in the presence of the abbess and the sisterhood, forced to smother her sorrow. The evening before the day on which she was to take the irrevocable vows, without feeling any vacation but despair, arrived; a nun had accompanied her from the chapel to her cell; and while her eyes overflowed with tears at the recollection of the past, and fear for the future, she listened in silence to the exhortations of the sisters, which was interrupted by a loud knocking at the outward gate, and the trampling of horses; an unusual noise alarmed the whole house, which was followed by a pause of silence; every thing terrifies the unhappy—a messenger now summoned *Algitha* to the hall of the convent, where as soon as she entered, the abbess taking her hand, presented her to Prince *Edmund*, the elder son of *Ethelred*, as the widow of Earl *Sifreth*, and left them together. *Algitha* was already in the habit of the house; her tresses shorn, and her eyes drowned in tears: she deemed all hope of earthly happiness at an end, and waited for the moment that was to conduct her to the altar with a sort of resignation mixed with despair; the Prince regarded her

her a moment in silence; the cruel revenge of his fire acted in cold blood on the Danish lords, distressed his soul; but chiefly he regretted the death of *Sifreth*, who had stood between the English and many insults, and hearing as he passed the monastery, that his widow Countess was immured there, he stopped to condole her sorrows, and offer her his good offices.— Her beauty, which shone through her tears, softened him still more in her favour, and the dignity with which she bore her sorrows, and the sad reverse of her fortune, charmed him, and inspired him with respect for her misfortunes. He entreated her to suspend her vows until his return from court, and assured her that all the influence he possessed with the King should be used in her favour. He then took his leave, but carried her idea with him, and having first recommended *Algitha* to the most respectful care of the abbess, departed for the court to solicit her enlargement; he obtained it with little difficulty, and the restoration of part of her possessions. Earl *Sifreth* had a castle in a distant and retired part of the kingdom, to this abode it was the will of *Ethelred* his widow should retire, where he promised she should remain unmolested. *Edmund* overjoyed at his success, repaired with speed to the castle, and recalling as many of the antient domestics as had escaped the massacre, and collecting them, he bade them prepare for the reception of the Countess, and

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speeded to the convent to conduct her to her abode. As the passion of *Edmund* was accompanied with delicacy and respect, he contented himself with rendering the fair widow all manner of good offices ; and asked only permission to visit her in her retirement. He knew it was in vain to hope for the consent of the King to espouse her ; he therefore concealed his design, and when time had somewhat blunted her sorrow, he offered her his vows, and was accepted ; and in the presence of a few friends, their hands were joined in the chapel of the castle. This marriage was easily concealed during the short peace that *England* enjoyed after the departure of *Canute*, but that deceitful calm was succeeded by a tempest that soon shook the land.

“ The Danish Prince left *England* so precipitately, not from fear of *Ethelred* ; but from apprehension that his brother *Harold* would seize *Denmark* for himself. *Canute* knew that while he possessed that kingdom, he had the power to subdue *England* at any time ; and though he saw the superiority of that beautiful isle over his own rude and uncultured country, yet a predilection in its favour, determined him not to lose it, nor throw away the crown of his ancestors to secure one, that at his better leisure, he knew he could obtain. While *Canute* was employed in reducing *Denmark* to obedience, *Ethelred* began to live as if he had no reverse of fortune to fear. A little before
he

he abandoned his kingdom, he had espoused the Princess *Edgith*, his daughter by *Elgiva*, to *Ednik*, Duke of *Mercia*; and from this fatal marriage sprung many woes to *England*; and to me all those ills that have since befallen me, or are likely to be my lot;—but what are my sorrows to those of a whole people!—and oft do I forget my own, in lamenting for those of my country. *Mercia's* Duke had sought the fair *Edgith*, less for her beauty, (though she possessed much of her mother's, with the sparkling animation of her fire) or for her gentle virtues, than to ally himself to his sovereign. This lord had been corrupted by the Danes, during the short reign of *Sweyn*, and he was more attached to the interest of *Canute* than to that of *Ethelred*; but he covered his disaffection by the false glozings of assumed loyalty, to preserve his influence at court, and held secret intelligence with *Canute*; who informed by him of the supine and indolent conduct of *Ethelred*, made haste when he had secured the throne of his father, to return, and recover that of *England*. During the short calm that *Ethelred* enjoyed after the expulsion of the Danes, *Edmund* had wholly lived at the castle, to which *Algitha* retired after her release from the convent; remote from court, and surrounded on all sides by an antient forest little frequented, and by a chain of hills which defended it from the bitter blasts of the Northern shore, the abode of *Edmund*, and his marri-

age with the widow of *Sifreth* remained unknown and unsuspected. The intimacy that marriage allows, gave him opportunities to discover numberless graces that her modesty and reserve had concealed from public notice; with her he could have lived a life of retirement from every pleasure, but what her converse and society bestowed;—or of labour for her sake, rather than monarch of the universe without her; yet a dread of the evils which threatened *England*, from the restless ambition of *Canute*, and the indolence of his fire, oft clouded his moments of highest happiness, though he concealed his forebodings from the partner of his heart. As the forest, which lay near the abode of *Edmund*, abounded with game, the Prince and his fair spouse spent many of their hours in hawking, and the pursuit of the stag; and at eve with their little train, banquetted on the spoils of the wood.

“ *Algitha* had discovered in a remote part of the forest, a deep and pathless vale at the foot of a craggy hill; through it ran the collected streams that rushed down the rocky sides of the mountain; it was surrounded by oaks, which had remained for ages untouched by the stroke of the woodman. Here, to vary their pleasures, the spouse of *Edmund*, who delighted in the wild beauties of nature, and little weening it would be the scene of many days of future sorrow and seclusion, caused a straw roofed cottage to be built; its only ornament

ment the woodbind which covered its walls, and was taught to twine around the latticed casement; the pebbly floor and beechen benches were decked with rushes, moss, and the most fragrant wood flowers:—near the cottage stood a clump of flowering hawthorn, amidst whose branches a nightingale sung through the night her plaintive song:—a little flock of sheep that fed in the vale, and some goats which broused the sides of the rocky hill, were the only inhabitants of this sequestered spot, unless when *Edmund* and *Algitha*, sometimes alone, sometimes with a few attendants, visited the place. One day, leaving their train to follow the chace, they turned into a path that led to their beloved solitude, with only two attendants; and while their rural refreshment was preparing, wandered along a winding way that carried them to the top of the hill.

“The day was serene; and the sea, which washed the rocky shore at its bottom, was agitated only by the lightest breezes; *Edmund* tired with the chace, laid him down amongst some fragrant shrubs that grew amidst the rocks; and *Algitha* covering him with her mantle, and seeing him disposed to slumber, went at a little distance to view the calm bosom of the deep; but returning hastily, awaked her lord. “My beloved, (she said in a tremulous voice) arise, and try if thou canst explain to me yon fearful sight.” The Prince

arose, and following to the brow of the hill, beheld an innumerable fleet steering towards the port of *Sandwich*; the number of barks crowded with warriors on whose armour the sun beams glittered, and their ensigns shewed it was the fleet of *Denmark*; *Edmund* viewed it a moment in silence, then trying to assure *Algiſtha* (who trembled with apprehension) with hopes himself felt not; and sending an attendant to summon the hunters, he returned with his terrified spouse to the castle.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

EDWY:

EDWY:

AN HISTORIC TALE.

BOOK V.

“**T**OO well acquainted with the *unready* disposition of his sire, *Edmund* saw the necessity of flying to assist, and animate him by his presence.

“ His train assembled; he left a band of chosen knights, and some of his most trusty servants, to guard and attend on *Algitha*, of whom he took a tender and hasty leave, and sped to the court, where he found the King, sinking under terrors, inspired by the intelligence he hourly received. The approach of the *Danish* fleet had thrown all *England* into consternation; but when the ships cast anchor, and *Canute* with his numerous army disembarked, their terrors encreased. These dread-inspiring vessels were a sort of galley with one mast, on which was spread a large sail; the

stern adorned with the figures of men, lions, bears, or eagles; gilt and painted with the gayest colours; on the top of each mast were figures of some birds, which turning with the wind, shewed from what point it blew*. So great was the splendor of this mighty fleet, that it at once dazzled the eye, and appalled the hearts of the beholders; whilst the rays of the sun reflected from the bright polished arms of the Danes; and their gilded barks exhibited a spectacle equally terrible and magnificent: the gallies that carried the Danish Prince and his train, were adorned above the rest; at the stern of one was seen the statue of a man with a countenance fierce and menacing as if alive; on another, a dragon of burnished brass; on a third, a furious bull, in act to rush on the affrighted beholders; and this fleet, so great and formidable, more than half vanquished the English, before they felt the force of the *Danish* arms. In vain *Edmund* strove to comfort and hearten the King; his distemper, trifling at first, was so heightened by the perturbation of his mind, that two days after his son's arrival, he expired in his arms, leaving the kingdom in the most deplorable state. Queen *Emma* and her son were at the court of her brother, Duke *Richard*, as she wished not to re-visit *England* until the realm was in per-

* See the description of *Canute's* fleet in *HENRY's* History of England.

fect peace. The Normans who had accompanied the King to *England*, were in little power; and *Edmund*, the first born of *Ethelred*, meeting no opposition, was proclaimed King. *Athelstan*, his brother, had died in his infancy; and *Edgith*, his ill-fated sister, was wedded to the traitor *Edrick*. I alone, of all the wretched race of *Ethelred*, remained unthought of and unknown; since the death of good Earl *Edgar*; I had lived an obscure life, in the family of Earl *Goodwin*; the behaviour of this lord was according to the fortune of *Ethelred*: when the King regained his throne, he talked of matching me with his niece who had been left to his care; and whose gentle manners had much endeared her to me; though what I felt resembled more a brother's friendship than a lover's warmth. But when the affairs of *Ethelred* took a different turn, scarce did Lord *Goodwin* suffer my abode at his castle. His sons, now arrived at man's estate, resided at court; and his daughter, still a child, was brought up by the Lady *Arundel*, his sister: the gentle *Ethelgiva* remained in a neighbouring convent, where I sometimes saw her; the rest of my time was passed alone, or in the sports of the field, to which I was little inclined. My mind depressed, and by my situation disposed to melancholy, was not amused by what is the chief delight of youth; and I found more pleasure in conversing with the monks of an abbey, founded by *Edgar* the Peaceable,

Peaceable, the fire of *Ethelred*, where *Elfrick*, the most learned of our clerks, resided, and who, pleased with my desire of knowledge, took much pleasure in my instruction. Besides the use of letters, (which since the death of *Alfred* the Great, had been much neglected, and become no part of the education of our youth;) he taught me that in books may be found a resource against most of the evils of life; that should the frowns of fortune deprive me of the pleasures of friendship, or keen disease or rigid want, at once assail; that literary studies would afford relief; that the charming pursuit of useful and elegant erudition would enable me to bear, instead of sinking beneath adversity."—And hast thou," asked the hermit, "profited by the precepts and instruction of the good father?"—"Too soon," answered Edwy, "was I deprived of them, and driven from my native land, to wander alone through a world ever inhospitable to the depressed;—but I will not anticipate."

"During the reign of *Sweyn*, the traitor *Eldred* lost his life, in defence of a castle in which he had stored a great part of his treasure; the *Danes* took, and sacked it; and while he defended the gate of the inner court, encouraging his people by an example of desperate bravery, an arrow from a Danish bow, pierced his heart; he fell, and the besiegers who crouded into the gate, trod out the remains of his life. With him sunk all hope of
my

my fortune; the inheritance of the ill-fated *Matilda* had remained until I was of an age proper to claim it, in the care of this lord, her nearest kinsman; but hitherto the wretched and unsettled state of the realm prevented my demanding a restoration of my right, until, by the death of *Eldred*, it was lost; the Danes seizing on it with his other possessions. The confusion and unsettled state of the King's affairs, since his return from *Normandy*, till his sudden death, made me postpone presenting myself to him until more quiet was restored. But when the voice of the people called *Edmund* to the throne, and his wish to avow his marriage, and present *Algotha* to his subjects, made him haste to conduct her to court; *Alwin*, ever generous and virtuous, led the King, on his return to *London*, to *Goodwin* castle, where he found me alone; my strong resemblance to *Ethelred* struck him; he saluted me with affection, and bade me accompany him to court, where he acknowledged and called me brother, and promised to take care of my fortune. Earl *Goodwin*'s countenance again beamed friendship to me, and he spoke to *Edmund* of my marriage with the gentle *Ethelgiva*; the generous Prince supposing my heart engaged, gave his assent, and promised that when the realm was settled in peace, he would create me Earl of *Cornwall*, (which had once belonged to my maternal ancestors) and annex to it many rich domains;—but who
can

can depend on the brightest earthly prospects! mine, like a sudden flash of lightning, appeared for a moment, and then vanished for ever! Preparations were now made for the coronation of *Edmund* and *Algitha*, and it was performed with less pomp than satisfaction; 'twas not a time for sports or banquettings, in possession of the crown of his ancestors, and his queen placed in safety; *Edmund* turned his thoughts to oppose the Danes, and due preparation was made to drive them from the kingdom.

“ Though the valour of the *Anglo-Saxons* had degenerated much from its antient character, during the long and peaceful reign of *Edgar*; and much of their spirit was suppressed by the continual harrassing of the Danes in the reign of *Ethelred*; yet *Edmund*, brave himself, strove to animate his people with their former courage and intrepidity:—he sent, he flew every where to get an army together, and left a body of troops under the command of *Alwin*, to watch the motions of the Danes, who remained quietly encamped near the place where he lauded his army.

“ Meantime *Edmund* laboured to convince his people, that by open force, and the honourable use of arms alone, were these fell ravagers to be driven hence:—he made them remark that probably they were already possessed with a dread of the revived courage of the English, who by that alone could defeat them; that

that to repeat the misconduct of the late reign, and attempt to avert their hostilities by bribes, was like oil thrown on the fire, and would enflame, instead of allaying their avarice. Added to these considerations, he entertained fears, which however he carefully concealed from his people; he had studied the characters of those invaders of his country, and he knew that many things contributed to kindle a rage for martial achievements in the Danes; they were Pagans, though their King had, during his abode in *England*, embraced Christianity; but his Danish subjects continued in the worship of their ancestors. The objects of their worship had been warriors, whose favour, and also their own admission into the hall of *Odin*, the god of slaughter and desolation, they imagined could only be obtained by brave exploits: thus all their hopes of future happiness depended on the violence of their own death, and on the numbers they had slain in battle.—This belief inspired them with a contempt of death, and a thirst of blood:—their education contributed to these ferocious sentiments:—many of them born in camps or fleets, the first objects they were taught to regard, were arms, storms, battles, blood, and slaughter. Brought up amidst these terrible objects, they soon became familiar, and at length delightful; their childhood was passed in those exercises that inure both mind and body to hardship and danger; and their first words were tales

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of warlike exploits ; the victories of their ancestors ; and songs in praise of him who had slain the greatest number of enemies, or had fallen in battle :—thus their youthful hearts were early taught to beat high with martial ardour ;—to grasp the sword and spear, and mingle with their fathers in the bloody field. Add to this, that *Denmark*, being barren and uncultivated, induced them to seek in other countries that plenty which their own did not afford :—such were the enemies *Edmund* knew he had to dispute his crown with.

But to the great surprise of *Edmund*, the Danish Prince still remained quietly encamped near the place where he landed his army ; and though the Danes who were settled in *England*, flocked every day to his standard, he made no preparation for battle, but seemed to wait the motions of *Edmund*. That good Prince, who possessed less ambition, than love for his people, was willing to spare their blood, and to secure their rights, though at the expence of his own life ; he summoned a counsel of his chief nobles, and after observing on the conduct of the Danish King, proposed to end the contest by challenging him to single combat. Silence prevailed in the assembly for some minutes ; it was at length broken by Earl *Goodwin*, who said, “ He believed he spoke the sentiments of all present, when he reminded the King, that should he fall, or be worsted by the sword
“ of

“ of *Canute*, his subjects would be sufferers.” *Edmund* hastily interrupted him by saying, “ that he trusted in the protection of heaven, “ and the justice of his cause.” All the assembly then entreated him to allow his subjects to revenge the injuries he had suffered, and manifest their affection for him, their country, their families, and that love of freedom which once was, and ought ever to be the spring that actuated the hearts of Englishmen, who, when animated by a valiant leader, though driven to the worst extremities, are excited by danger to new exertions of courage; and would at the present crisis ensure them victory. *Edmund* bestowed on his people those praises which their affection for him, and their courage, so well deserved; but still dreading the effects of the Danish valour, though he concealed that he depended less on their prowess than on the force of his own arm, remained steady in his resolve to challenge *Canute* to single combat; and at the risk of his own life to endeavour to spare the blood of his subjects.

“ I was about to speak, when Sir *Edwin*, a valiant knight of *Westmoreland*, who, in all the changes of *Ethelred*’s fortune, had remained loyally attached to his interest, came forward, and modestly desired to be heard; he entreated that “ instead of risking his own “ life, his sovereign would allow an equal “ number of knights from both armies to try “ their

“ their force, and end the contest; himself to
“ be included in the number of champions.”
How much at that moment, did I lament my
want of skill in the use of arms, when so fair
an occasion offered of rendering service to my
country, and to a brother so dear to me as
was *Edmund*!—but he, though grateful to the
gallant knight of *Westmoreland*, declined his
offer. “ Wouldst thou, my dear *Edwin*,” he
said, “ wert thou in my place, wish to sur-
“ vive, not merely the loss of a throne, but
“ the liberty of *England*, should the Danes pre-
“ vail? No! let this arm defend the crown of
“ my ancestors; but if it fails, may the bet-
“ ter fortune of *Canute* deprive me, together
“ with my kingdom, of my life also, which
“ then would be a burthen to myself, and a
“ disgrace to my country.” “ Ah! my sove-
reign,” rejoined the generous *Edwin*, “ par-
don the freedom of thy servant; but if thou
fallest, what will become of the queen? Canst
thou then resolve to leave the tender *Algitha* a
prey to the lawless conqueror?—No,” replied
Edmund, “ her safety shall be secured; before
“ the Danish Prince enters the lists against me,
“ I mean to request that, should his prowess
“ prevail, the castle where, with my *Algitha*,
“ I have passed days of such bliss, as courts
“ or sceptres cannot give, and which once
“ was the property of *Sifrith*, his gallant
“ countryman, may unmolested remain her’s;
“ in it I have stored treasure sufficient for her
“ exigencies,

" exigencies, should I fall:—our child, oh
 " killing thought! must be brought up in ob-
 " scurity; to save his life he must be kept in
 " ignorance of his rights; in doing this, I
 " consult much more the feelings of his mo-
 " ther than my own;—but what could I not
 " do to secure her comfort!—Her whom pity
 " made me wed; but whom an acquaintance
 " with her excellence makes me adore;—alas!
 " unhappy and ill-fated *Algiha*! I hoped to
 " shield thee from ill fortune, but something
 " whispers to me that I shall leave thee de-
 " fenceless!" " Not while I live, if I survive
 " my sovereign," exclaimed the gallant *Ed-*
win, " as far as my power extends, thy queen,
 " thy child, and all thou dost hold dear, shall
 " receive from the arm of *Edwin* all the pro-
 " tection he can give. As the generous *Ed-*
win spoke the words, "*all thou dost hold dear*,"
 he cast his eyes on me, and the King affection-
 ately taking his hand, and joining it with
 mine, " I accept," he said, " of thy friend-
 " ship; be to my queen, my child, and to my
 " brother, (for is he not the son of my fire?) a
 " friend: to thee I commit them, should I
 " fall; but my soul sickens at suspense;—haf-
 " ten, my friend, to the Danish camp; be
 " thou the messenger of my defiance to *Ca-*
nute, and quickly bear me his answer; but
 " first accept a mark of my esteem and grati-
 " tude; thy possessions have been lessened
 " by the adherence of thy family to the inte-

“ rest of their rightful Princes; loyalty and
 “ honour alone, and not motives of self-inter-
 “ rest, have ever attached them; thou dost in-
 “ herit all their virtue; be it my care to raise
 “ thy fortune above what thy ancestors were
 “ lords of; let their merit be rewarded in
 “ thee; be thou Earl of *Westmoreland*, and
 “ with thy sword defend the domains I annex
 “ to it from those proud invaders;—but hie
 “ thee now to thy camp, and let thy return be
 “ quick.” This he said to prevent what the
 gratitude of *Edwin* was about to express;
 then added, “ I have no doubts of thy attach-
 “ ment, and need no professions to convince
 “ me of thy gratitude; in bestowing honours
 “ and riches on thee, I only enlarge thy pow-
 “ ers of doing what the generosity of thy heart
 “ prompts thee to; and to thee I commit the
 “ redress of many grievances, and the reliev-
 “ ing of much distress, from the knowledge
 “ of which, my own situation would preclude
 “ me; be thou then the instrument of good
 “ to many, and let the sovereign deserve the
 “ applause of his people, for that power with
 “ which he means to invest thee.”

“ Shut up in *Goodwin* castle, I had never
 beheld the Danish Prince, and now desired
 permission to accompany *Westmoreland*, who
 was to present the letter of *Edmund* to *Canute*.
 This letter was in the following terms:—*Ed-*
mund King of *England*, to the King of *Den-*
mark. As we suppose the princely *Canute*,

“ as unwilling to spill the blood of his subjects,
“ as are to destroy the lives of our’s, we pro-
“ pose to him to end all contests by single com-
“ bat in view of some chosen commanders of
“ both armies; and be his the crown to whom
“ Heaven decrees victory, and in peace, and
“ without further contest, let him enjoy it.”

A herald went before, and announced our approach; we were conducted through ranks of fierce and haughty Danes, to the pavilion of their King:—I observed that his dress, as well as that of the croud of warriors who surrounded him, exceeded in richness our Saxon attire; and well might it do so, when they had by plunder or extortion, amassed all the wealth of *England*. Their hair fair, or inclining to red, was combed and dressed with superior elegance; their tunics fastened with buttons of gold; and their vests embroidered with various figures; as were the belts with which their garments were girded about them; the clasp with which their mantle was fastened on the right shoulder, and the bracelets and chains that adorned their arms and necks, were of gold, and glittered with jewels. Methought they made an ostentatious display of their rich attire, as if to insult our plainness. After the example of *Westmoreland*, I wore light armour;—two pages bore our helmets. The Danish King received us courteously; I thought he eyed me with curiosity: *Westmoreland* hastened to execute his commission;

on; but *Canute* entreated he would wave all business until after the banquet; it was soon served in the royal tent, and consisted of such plenty and variety, especially of liquors, and the Danish lords indulged in such repeated libations, as demonstrated that they did not deem while on earth, abstinence necessary to secure the chief felicity of *Valhalla**.

“ *Westmoreland*, intent upon the business that brought him into the presence of the Danish Prince, evaded his frequent challenges to drink, and passed, or scarce tasted, the cup of intoxication. I followed his example; but as the Danes waxed warm with repeated goblets, we were forced with indignant reluctance, to listen to the boastful accounts of their valour and prowess:—*Canute* did not join in those discourses full of vanity and audacity; he seemed pleased, and no doubt supposed it would strike us with terror; but the steady soul of *Westmoreland* was incapable of being appalled by words; and he checked his rising disgust, lest it should betray him into ought hurtful to the interest of his Prince. At length the feast concluded, and the ambassador of *Edmund* presented his letter to the Danish King. *Canute* perused, and seemed to consider the contents with attention; then de-

* *Valhalla*, the paradise of the Danes and Scandinavians; and they suppose that repeated draughts of ale and mead, from the skulls of their enemies, in the hall of *Odin*, constitute the chief felicity of heroes after death.

fring our patience, he retired with the council to an inner tent; in a few minutes *Canute* returned, and gave to *Westmoreland* this answer:—That, “sensible his weak constitution
“and small stature, were an unequal match for
“the English Prince, he declined the combat;
“but proposed the matter might be left to the
“decision of the principal officers in both armies.” After receiving this answer we were dismissed with presents; to *Westmoreland* a sword, the belt of which was enriched with jewels; to me, a dagger, the hilt of which was of gold. As he presented it, he eyed me with uncommon curiosity; his ardent and piercing looks offended me, and overspread my face with a blush of indignation; but I restrained myself, and making a silent obeisance, quitted the pavillion with Lord *Edwin*, and returned to report our reception to the King.

“*Edmund* was grieved at the answer of the Danish Prince, and now lent an ear to the repeated proposal of *Westmoreland*,—that the contest might be ended by the champions of the English and the Danish Kings. “Then
“on this condition be it,” replied *Edmund*,
“that I shall be one of them; I risk a crown
“and my life, while the Dane can lose unjust
“hopes only.” “My sovereign,” answered the gallant *Edwin*, “indulge thy courageous
“wishes; and though those boastful Danes attribute to themselves such prowess, as sur-
“passes

“ passes the force of other men ; yet shall thy
“ arm prevail against them ; nor fear I to meet
“ their strength in battle.” My heart then
glowed within me ; I longed to do my country
service ; but chiefly I longed to signalize
my attachment to my Prince ; he read my
wishes in my face, and taking my hand, pre-
vented my speaking. “ I doubt not, my bro-
“ ther,” he said, “ thy affection ; but unused
“ to arms, I should only risque thy safety, and
“ give those brutal invaders an advantage
“ they would seize with unfeeling barbarity ;
“ reserve then thy courage for future occasion,
“ until thou art more expert at those exercises
“ that fit one for war ; meantime, be thou as-
“ sured of my gratitude for thy intention.”—
“ But let us hear,” he said, turning to *West-*
moreland, “ those boasts by which thou wast
“ so much disgusted ; bragged they of their
“ cruelties in *England*, when, like fell tigers,
“ they butchered helpless age and infancy ?”
“ No,” answered *Edwin*, “ at such discourse
“ I could not have commanded my temper ;
“ scarce could I do it when I heard those Pa-
“ gans tell, that he amongst them who wished
“ to acquire the name of a hero, must not
“ shrink from any danger ; must always at-
“ tack two enemies ; stand firm, and receive
“ three ; retire only one pace from four ; and
“ fly from no fewer than five*.” “ Said they

* For the martial laws of the *Danes* and *Scandinavians*,
see MAILLETT'S *Northern Antiquities*;

“so,” interrupted *Edmund* with an indignant smile; “perhaps then, my friend, they may scorn to meet our single arm, and defy us as the Philistine champion did the host of Israel; but hasten back, and make to the Dane thy own proposal; he can have no apprehension of beholding a combat, where we risk our life, while he refuses to try his fortune in single fight.”

“*Westmoreland*, as impatient as his sovereign to end this debate, returned in haste to the Danish camp; and I, as before, accompanied him. The sound of clarions proclaimed our approach; we were admitted to the presence of *Canute*, who listened to the new proposal of *Edmund*, without once interrupting his ambassador, until he had finished, coolly returned this answer:—“That, determined to avoid the shedding of the blood of his subjects, he would not swerve from his resolve;” he added that, “his rights in *England* should be decided by those in both armies who should be chosen as judges of it.” Then turning to a knight of his train, he desired him to conduct us beyond the Danish lines, and with much courtesy saluting us, withdrew to an inner tent.

“I observed discontent louring in the brow of the Danish officers who attended in the pavillion; they wished methought, for the combat; we were scarcely without the camp, when the attendant said with a cautious voice,
“see

“ see you not, my lords, the unwillingness of
“ our monarch to shed blood?”—“ That he
“ feared,” said *Edwin*, “ to meet our King in
“ arms, I wonder not at; but on what he
“ builds his hopes, by leaving the decision to
“ a peaceful award, I cannot divine.” “ Hear
then from me,” answered the Dane, who hav-
ing long resided in *England*, had conceived an
affection for the Saxons amongst whom he had
lost much of his native ferocity, abjured his
Pagan principles, and embraced those of Chris-
tianity in secret:—“ *Canute*,” continued the
Dane, “ knowing the affection of the English
“ for their antient Princes, and how entirely
“ *Edmund* possessed the hearts of his subjects;
“ and sensible of his personal bravery, which
“ might animate the people to their antient
“ valour and force; and foreseeing the loss of
“ a great kingdom might follow, if he risked
“ a battle and was worsted; he deliberated
“ some time after his landing, and having en-
“ camped his army, and held many conferen-
“ ces with his Danish friends who had remain-
“ ed in *England*; he continued quiet, as you
“ have seen; but it is not for me,” went on
the Dane after a pause, “ to speak all I think;
“ only this much let me say—let your King
“ beware of treachery:—adieu! my lords;
“ my longer converse may be noticed; you
“ are now without the Danish lines;” Saying
this he bowed, turned towards the camp, and
left us in amazement at what he had uttered.

“ *Westmoreland*

“ *Westmoreland* at last said, “ How understandest thou those ambiguous words of the “ Dane?” I answered, “ that they alarmed me, but I could not divine their meaning.” We however concluded some danger threatened the life of *Edmund*, and hastened to put him on his guard, and to speak the steady resolve of the Danish King. *Edmund*, while he listened, seemed agitated by rage and disappointment: “ What!” cried he out, when *Westmoreland* had ended, “ are the boastings of “ those braggadocios to end in traiterously attempting my life!—but thus warned, I dare “ their malice, and will confide in the affection of my people, and in heaven who will “ befriend me according to the justice of my “ cause.” Many of the nobles joined with *Westmoreland*, in entreating that *Edmund* would double his guards until after the conference that was to decide who should fill the English throne, was over. The Earl of *Mercia* prevented the King’s answer, by observing that, “ as the Dane seemed determined not to risque “ a battle, nor yet to commit his fortune to “ the event of a single combat; was the conference refused, or even delayed, the army “ of *Canute* would, as heretofore they had often done, ravage the whole kingdom, and “ then retire with their booty to *Denmark*.” Lord *Goodwin* joined in this opinion, and observed that “ perhaps the Danish Prince entertained no other hopes from the conference

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“ than a pretence to retire without disgrace to
“ his own country, as the numerous army of
“ *Edmund* shewed him better able to defend
“ his right, and repulse the Dane, than any
“ Prince since the days of *Alfred* the Great,
“ had shewn.”

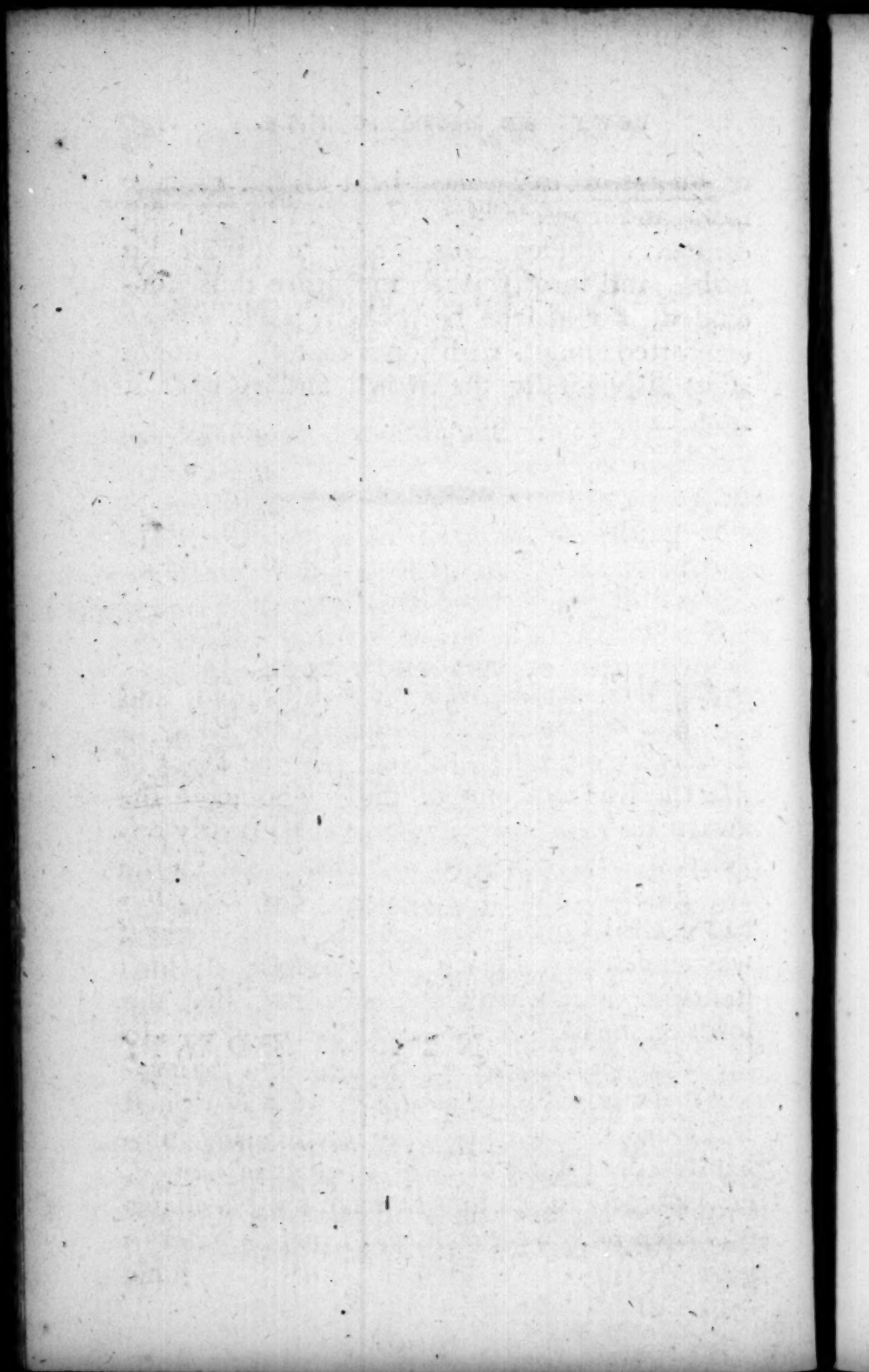
“ Thus compelled by the reasons of those
two noblemen, though the soul of *Edmund*
was grieved that he could not try by the force
of his single arm, to deliver his country from
the Danish yoke, he gave an unwilling con-
sent; and it was agreed, that “ the two Kings
“ and those appointed to settle their difference,
“ should repair to the isle of *Alney*. The Earl
“ of *Mercia* offering to report this to *Canute*,
“ and appoint the time of meeting.” Himself,
Earl *Goodwin*, and four other lords, were ap-
pointed the judges on the part of *England*;
Westmoreland to stay with the army, and my-
self at the King’s desire, returned to *London*
to remain with *Algitha* till the conference was
ended. For many days we suffered the most
tormenting suspense; but judge of our asto-
nishment when a courier arrived, and inform-
ed us that four of the six judges on the part
of *England*, had agreed with those named by
the Danish Prince, to decree that the two
Kings should divide the kingdom; *Edmund*
for his share, to have all *Wessex*; and *Canute*,
the kingdom of *Mercia*. *Algitha*, tender and
unambitious, rejoiced that the personal safety
of her Lord was secured by this treaty; and

on his return to *London*, bent all her cares to
soothe and console him. I shared in his dis-
content at being thus forced to divide his
realm, and foresaw that the peace thus con-
cluded, would soon be broken; and *Edmund*
comforted himself with hopes that yet he might
assert his right by the sword, and recover it
from those proud invaders.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

N 2

EDWY:



EDWY:

AN HISTORIC TALE.

BOOK VI.

“THE armies were now disbanded, and *Westmoreland* followed the King to *London*; from him I learned that the Duke of *Mercia* was not one of those who gave the award in favour of *Canute*; yet he faintly opposed it, and seemed at last convinced by the arguments of the other judges. Earl *Goodwin* had declined being one, and the Lord *Arundel* was chosen in his place. From every circumstance I agreed with *Westmoreland*, that the lords on the part of *Edmund*, had been won to the interest of *Canute* by *Edrick*. On his marriage with the Princess *Edgith*, he was created Duke of *Mercia*; and now considering himself less the subject of *Edmund* than of *Canute*, he hastened to do him homage for his estates on which he usually resided; but to preserve

some shew of loyalty to his Prince, he remained not long with the Dane, but conducted the Princess to *London*. *Edmund* received her with the utmost affection, and her treacherous lord with every mark of respect; whatever were his suspicions of the latter, he buried them in his own bosom, and having recovered a little from his chagrin, he turned his thoughts to the settling of my fortune; he now proposed to *Earl Goodwin* to complete my marriage with the lady *Ethelgiva*, who was conducted to court and presented with jewels of high value by the King. The day for the ceremony of my nuptials was at hand, and it was to be honoured by a tournament, and to conclude with a splendid mask at court. But all my fair prospects were at once overclouded, and those of *England* destroyed!

“ Two days before that which was fixed on for my nuptials, an express arrived to the Duke of *Mercia*; he informed the King that business of importance required his presence at home, and that he meant to set out on his return there early on the morrow. On the day of his departure, *Algotha* attended by the Lady *Ethelgiva* and many others, were to go down the *Thames* to view some gallies built on the construction of the Danish vessels; they only waited for the King who was in his apartment, attended by two of his chamberlaines; impatient at his delay, I went to the chamber door, and finding it fastened on the inside,
knocked

knocked several times, but received no answer; I listened, but all was silent; I began to apprehend I knew not what of danger, and called Lord *Edwin* hastily, who again knocked; we agreed to force open the door;—but O piteous fight!—*Edmund*—the gallant *Edmund*, in the bloom of life, the guardian of his people, the blessing of his country, lay basely murdered!—the back of his head was bruised, and it appeared as if the blow had been treacherously given behind to stun him; but a deep wound on his breast had put an end to his life, and we found him weltering in his gore. Alas! ill-fated *Edmund*! little did thy courage and superior strength avail thee; or the precaution of always wearing a coat of mail, which procured thee the title of *Edmund Ironsides*;—but who can guard against the hand of treachery!—with him fell the glory of the *Anglo-Saxons*; and by his death the Danes prevailed. The untimely death of this brave Prince overwhelmed his subjects with sorrow; he had not reigned quite a year; but in that short time he gave many proofs of wisdom, prudence, and generosity; and as his undaunted courage qualified him for the boldest scenes of war, had the blessing of his life been spared to his country, it would have risen to that height of glory and prosperity which it attained under *Alfred* the Great.

“ The two attendants of the King disappeared, and no doubt fled to the Duke of *Mercia*,
who

who was universally suspected to have bribed these servants to have murdered the King. "But why," asked the Hermit, "fell your suspicions on *Edrick*, who being brother-in-law to the King of *England*, had more interest in his reigning, than if the Dane possessed the crown?"—I should have told thee, "father," went on *Edwy*, "that when *Ethelred* bestowed the dukedom of *Mercia* (at his marriage) on *Edrick*, neither of these proceedings met the approbation of *Edmund*. This was not unknown to the Mercian, and it rankled in his treacherous heart; and possibly *Canute* found it not hard to win him over to his interest.

"I must draw a veil over the grief of the Queen; now a Queen no more:—twice a widow; there was no sorrow like her sorrow:—nor can I paint my own; it was equal to my loss; for in the grave of *Edmund*, lay buried all my hopes. *Westmoreland*'s too was such, as the merit of his amiable sovereign might claim from the friendship and gratitude of a generous and loyal heart; he forgot not his promises of protection and attachment to the family of his Prince, given at a time the present unhappy moment was so little foreseen; he tried to comfort me by the most earnest protestations of friendship; and seeing me insensible to every thing, he tried to rouse me, by reminding me of the wretched widow of *Edmund*, and how much she stood in need of comforters.

ers:—we visited her, and omitted nothing to soothe her sorrow:—not long before his death, she had brought her lord a second son, and had now two helpless orphans to tremble for.

“ Without other pomp than the unfeigned and bitter grief of those who attended the body of the King to the abbey of *Glastonbury*; we saw it laid in the tomb of *Edgar*, the father of *Ethelred*; and returned to *Algitha*, who was reconciled to life only by her affection to, and her fears for, her children; she was anxious to withdraw them from court, as her hopes in this calamitous crisis extended no farther than to the preservation of their lives. Their youth, the turbulence of the times, and the few (except *Westmoreland* and myself) who seemed interested for them, prevented her indulging expectations of their attaining the crown of their ancestors; and hastening her departure, with a small train she left *London*, and repaired with her sons *Edmund* and *Edward*, to that lone castle where with her lord she had lived the first happy year of her marriage; there she indulged her sorrow, and patiently expected a favourable change of fortune;—she laboured to improve the minds of her sons, and hoped that by making no exertions in their favour, she should not provoke the fate she dreaded for them. *Westmoreland* and myself only, of all the friends of *Edmund*, attended *Algitha* to her retirement; we then separated; he returned to *London* to watch over

over the interests of the young Princes; and I (as I thought it impolitic to slight the friendship of Earl *Goodwin*) with a heavy heart, followed him to his castle, where he had sent *Ethelgiwa* on the departure of *Algitha* from *London*.

“ I found the Earl alone; he had placed *Ethelgiwa* again in the convent, and received me rather with civility than with cordiality and warmth; but my grief made me regardless of every thing, and I passed whole days alone, in unavailing sorrow, which had so much depressed me, that I had not yet consulted with Earl *Goodwin* how to secure the rich possessions bestowed on me by the generous *Edmund* a few days before his death. When I took leave of *Westmoreland*, he renewed his vows of friendship. Alas! dear *Edwin*, generous friend! sincere indeed were thy professions; but fatal did they prove to thyself!—Better had it been hadst thou shewn less attachment to an unhappy victim of adverse fortune, and reserved thyself for the defence of thy country, which in thee lost its chief, its last remaining support!—Expresses frequently arrived to Earl *Goodwin*, who shut up in his private apartment, received them without witnesses; nor ever mentioned the purport of them to me: stupified by grief, I felt no desire to be acquainted with what seemed to occupy all his thoughts: left whole days alone, I passed them in the woods that surrounded the castle, nor tasting any pleasure from the return of that
soft

soft season which clothes the earth with green. In vain the vallies smiled, and the soft bosom of the lawn breathed fragrance; in vain the warbling of the feathered race—in vain the heavens displayed an aspect bright and serene; in vain the chearful spring now advancing to summer, announced the effects of that UNIVERSAL LOVE, which pervades and animates all NATURE; and which alike displayed in the melody of birds, in the active power of the animal world, in the gay tints of flowers, in the smiling aspect of general creation, and in the charms of female beauty; yet all had lost the power to affect me. One day as I returned from the forest to the gloom of my own chamber, I was informed by the porter, that “his lord, attended by his whole train of knights, was departed in obedience to the summons of *Canute*; that himself and a few domestics only, were left to take care of the castle.” “Did your lord,” I asked, “leave no directions that I should follow?” “None,” the porter replied, “nor said ought concerning thee.” I felt as if deserted, and unconnected with all: the first man, when turned into the wide unpeopled world, was not more at a loss whither to turn for shelter: that world, empty and uncultivated as it was, was yet his own: I resembled the stricken deer whom the herd all avoid, and none are willing to receive or countenance.

“After

“ After the departure of the Earl, I sunk into a sort of lethargic sorrow, and passed whole days without rising from a sleepless couch, or scarce taking food sufficient to sustain nature; even curiosity became dead in me, and I inquired not into the cause of Lord *Goodwin*’s sudden departure; but confiding in the power and friendship of *Westmoreland*, left my rights, with those of the young Princes, to his protection. At last I was roused from this stupor; a lady whom I knew to be a favourite attendant on the Lady *Ethelgiva*, and who gave me a letter which contained but few words in it:—“ She advised, if I valued my
“ life, to save it by flying from *Goodwin* castle;
“ exhorted me to hope for better days, and to
“ accept, as my own, the contents of the cas-
“ ket her attendant would give me; and con-
“ cluded with advising me not to wait the
“ Earl’s return from the court of *Canute*.” While I read this letter, the damsel of *Ethelgiva* went away, leaving the casket on a table. On opening the casket, I found the jewels with which *Ethelgiva* had been presented by *Edmund*, which appeared by her restoring them, to dissolve all ties between us. Though what I felt for the gentle *Ethelgiva* resembled fraternal affection rather than love, yet I could not think, without a pang, that I might perhaps never more behold her; and I resolved to visit the convent, and if possible, receive from her an explanation of those dreadful,
but

but dark hints, contained in her letter ; but she was too strictly guarded, and I was forced to return to the castle, where I lingered a few days. At length an order arrived, by which I found myself banished from my country for ever : at the same time I received a peremptory order from Lord *Goodwin* to quit his castle, nor attempt to conceal myself under his roof. These tidings were delivered with tears in his eyes, by a domestic who had known me from my childhood ; and I extorted from him a confession that “ his lord had said nothing to “ the Dane in my favour ;—*Canute* had, with “ little opposition, been declared protector “ to the young Princes, and feigning a zeal “ for their interest, as the blood of their antient “ kings filled my veins, and as I much resembled *Ethelred* ; *Canute* declared he entertained fears lest the English, impatient to have “ a Prince of the Saxon race on the throne, “ might be easily drawn from their allegiance “ to *Edmund*’s sons. But thou owest thy banishment,” went on the man, “ to the fears of “ *Canute*, lest thou shouldst attempt to excite “ the English to assert the right of the Princes, “ and oppose his designs ; else why are the few, “ firmly attached to the late King, removed “ from all power and influence ? Why did the “ faithful *Alwin* and the gallant *Westmoreland* “ meet their fate in a quarrel raised from no “ apparent cause, and excited none knows by “ whom !” “ *Westmoreland* !” —I exclaimed,

VOL. I.

O

interrupting

interrupting him, " what fate—what quar-
" rel—speak quickly! what has befallen him?"
" He is no more," answered the man; " a
" few days ago; the day before *Canute* had
" himself declared protector and regent of the
" realm for the sons of *Edmund*, some riotous
" Danes crossed the Lord of *Westmoreland*, as
" he was stepping into his barge with only a
" few followers, amongst whom was *Alwin*,
" he turned to chastise the rudeness of the
" Dane, who returned a blow with the flat of
" his sword, by plunging his into the body of
" *Westmoreland*; and a number of murderous
" Danes then rushing on the few attendants,
" butchered them, though none but *Alwin* at-
" tempted resistance; the barge-men shared
" the same fate, and none were left to relate
" this massacre but the Danes, who feared not
" the anger of their Prince for the death of
" a man who had opposed the first mention of
" confiding the sons of *Edmund* to his care;
" and had demanded that you should be put
" in possession of those domains in *Cornwall*,
" which the deceased King had granted thee
" before his death." " Let those murderers,"
I said, " take my life also; 'tis not worth pre-
" serving!—*Edwin*!—*Alwin*!—dear and ge-
" nerous friends! I will court your fate!"
Blinded by rage and grief, I was going I
knew not whither, if the man, now attached
to me by pity for my misfortunes, had not
stopt me; " whither wouldst thou go," he
asked,

asked, "restrain thy grief; nor let despair
"urge thee to throw away thy life; better re-
"serve it to befriend the helpless sons of *Ed-*
"*mund.*" Finding I returned no answer, but
remained with my eyes fixed to the earth, he
went on: "thou art banished, 'tis true; but
"may easily remain in *England*; the good ab-
"bot under whom thou wert educated, will, no
"doubt, receive and conceal thee: I will go
"and prepare him; and as soon as the gloom
"of night shall aid thee, follow to the abbey,
"nor fear to trust those holy men who can
"have no interest in betraying thee to *Canute*;
"tarry then with them, and leave to me to
"inform thee of all that passes."

"I availed myself of his advice and aid,
and repaired to the abbey; the monks promi-
sed to conceal me, and with them I passed my
days tranquilly, and soon got the better of
that impatient sorrow which had succeeded to
the stupor I had experienced since the death of
Edmund, till roused by that of the gallant and
generous *Westmoreland*, who had incensed
Canute by shewing too much attachment to the
family of *Ethelred*. Three years I remained
undiscovered in the abbey, when one day I was
told that *Anlof*, the domestic of Earl *Goodwin*,
waited for me in the great hall, I found him
relating somewhat which the monks listened
to with many signs of concern, "approach,"
said the good abbot, "and hear what this man
"has to inform thee of." I waited in silence,

and heard what filled my soul with sorrow; that "*Canute*, as protector to the sons of *Edmund*, had demanded them some months ago from their mother, who friendless, and dreading to provoke the tyrant, was forced to yield them to his power, and on his promise that they should often visit her; (and twice have they been permitted to return, and remain some weeks at the abode of *Algitha*;) but not many days since, *Canute* pretending much care for the improvement of the Princes, first mentioned his design to send them to perfect their education in *Denmark*." "*Denmark!*" I exclaimed, "is that Pagan and savage country to be the place of their education?—Means the Danish Prince to have them instructed to bow the knee to the idols of *Denmark*; and bred in ignorance of the Christian faith?"—"Alas! my son," answered one of the monks, "seest thou not the design of the Dane?—seest thou not that this King"—"Call him not King to me," I replied; "would to God," rejoined the father, "I could call him any thing but King of all *England*!—yet too surely is he entitled to that name, however for the present, he may refrain from assuming it. But seest thou not that he seeks but a pretext to send them hence; nor dare I express my fears for their future lot!" I felt dismayed and confounded at these words; they penetrated the thin veil with which *Canute*

nute had covered his murderous intent:—"I see it," exclaimed I, "but whatever is to be the fate of *Edmund's* sons, I will prevent, or share it." "May heaven," said all the good fathers, "prosper and protect thee and those helpless orphans!"

"The messenger then proceeded to inform me, "that the Princes were to leave *England* in a few days accompanied by *Elrick* a Dane, whom (to avoid suspicion) *Canute* had placed over them as a sort of governor; when they were taken from their mother; that if I meant to accompany the unfortunate sons of *Edmund*, I must hasten to meet them at the port, where a vessel lay to carry them to *Denmark*." I gave this messenger a jewel to secure his secrecy; then concealing the little treasure I possessed, about my person, and taking a sad farewell of the monks, set forward to the port, where I arrived some days before the Princes.

"I was so little known, that I easily procured a passage in the bark. I told the master I was going to view different countries; and that it was indifferent to me where I first arrived. I said this in hope to discover whither in reality, the ship was bound; or what was the design against these poor victims, with whom I embarked next day. One night, as I sat at the stern of the ship, buried in melancholy thought, looking at the ocean scarce agitated by a light breeze that played on its be-

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son; which reflected the pale splendours of the moon; I heard the Dane who had the care of the young Princes, say to one of his fellows: "I feel no pleasure at seeing our voyage draw to an end; each hour adds to my regret for having undertaken it; and the fond cares of those ill-fated children, shock my soul, and melt me to pity whenever I behold them; and to avoid what I dared not refuse to act, I almost wish that the sea would swallow up the vessel." The person to whom he talked, said somewhat in return, but as he leaned over the side of the vessel, I could not hear his reply; but *Elrick* going on soon unraveled the mystery:—"not that the King fears much the resentment of the English, who are without a leader, *Canute* having secured to his interest all the nobles of any account; but he wishes to stand fair in the public opinion, and to give a colour to his conduct. On my return I am to relate a plausible tale of the death of the young Princes during the voyage." One of the mariners now calling the man, I took his place by the Dane, whose native ferocity had been much abated by his long residence in *England*; I at once took my resolution, and resolved to risque my own life to save the helpless sons of *Edmund*; nor did I find the task a hard one:—already melted by pity for their fate, and by their innocent endearments, from compassionating them, the Dane began to form wishes

wishes for their safety, and listened with pleasure to the schemes I proposed for their preservation. Alas! it was the only time I ever had the opportunity to render good to any one; but heaven who sees my limited powers, will, I trust, accept my wishes when I can offer nothing more." "There is no doubt," said the Hermit, "but it will; and Heaven, who reads the heart, regards a disposition to charity and benevolence much more than those ostentatious, but partial, acts of seeming goodness, whose doers sound a trumpet to proclaim them to the world, from whom they have their reward." "I left nothing unsaid," resumed Edwy, "to incline the Dane to compassionate the helpless sons of *Edmund*; the affection they had inspired him with, aiding my entreaties, he consented to disobey *Canute*, who had directed him to confine them in an old solitary tower, that guarded a pass on the borders of *Sweden*, a usual place of confinement for state prisoners; where if neglect and want of air did not soon put an end to their lives, other means were to be used.

"After much consultation, we agreed to carry them to *Sweden*; the master of the bark, though a Dane, was not entrusted with the entire secret of what was intended; but was ordered, on leaving *England*, to obey *Etrick*; at his desire he changed the course of the vessel, and soon entered into one of the Swedish ports; we went on shore; I hastened to court,
and

and throwing myself at the King's feet, implored protection for the helpless Princes; he was moved by the relation I made him, and ordered them a civil reception; but his fears of provoking *Canute* into an enemy, soon got the better of his pity; and before my departure, (for to me he gave no encouragement to remain in his dominions) he sent the Princes to the court of *Solyman*, King of *Hungary*, where *Elrick* accompanied them, and dismissed the master of the bark, to relate in *England* the step he had taken, and his intention of no more returning to his native land. I remained at the Swedish court until the little retinue that attended the Princes to *Hungary*, returned; and hearing that *Solyman* had received the royal fugitives, and declared his intention to educate them according to their birth, I departed, and took my way to *Normandy*. My fears at an end for the lives of *Edmund* and *Edward*, which had entirely engrossed my thoughts, my own destitute state began now to employ them:---the sons of *Ethelred* and *Emma* were, I knew, safe under the protection of Duke *Richard*; and I thought if I made myself known, as one allied to them by blood, the Norman Duke would afford me a refuge in his court, where some opportunity might present itself, of rendering service to the English Princes, should they make any effort to assert their rights; and should they prove successful,

cessful, the domains bestowed on me by the royal *Edmund*, might be restored to me.

“ As the habit of a pilgrim not only secures safety, but an hospitable reception to those who wear it; on my arrival in the dominions of the Duke of *Normandy*, I put it on, determined to sound the inclinations of the Princes before I discovered myself. I had travelled at a slow rate for some days, and twice arrived too late at places where I hoped to meet them: dejected by those disappointments, I arrived weary and faint for want of refreshment, two days ago, at a lone house which stood near the entrance of yon wood; I approached an aged dame who sat milking some goats at the door; I entreated of her a little milk, which she gave willingly, and invited me to enter her habitation, which proved much superior to what its outward appearance had led me to expect. She took the way, and I followed to a hall hung round with arms for the chace and for war: I saw no person but my conductress, who, renewing the expiring fire with a fresh faggot, placed a table near it:—with some cold meats, and a flaggon of good wine; inviting me to recruit myself, while she prepared my bed, as I appeared fatigued; she left me alone, fastening the door at which she went out, on the other side; her doing so might be imputed to chance; yet I felt uneasy and alarmed: I arose, and softly opened a second door, which I found led to a dark and winding

winding passage; the recesses of which I then felt no inclination to explore. A winding staircase in one corner of the hall, led to a gallery that enclosed two of its sides, latticed breast high; but which shewed doors that opened to the chambers within: on the walls of this gallery also hung bows, swords, battle-axes, helmets, and coats of mail. No owner appeared, save the old dame, who seemed to be the sole mistress, and not an inhospitable one: excited by an anxious curiosity, I wished to learn who the real owner of this mansion was; yet, should there be cause of apprehension, I feared to awaken the suspicion of my hostess by making much inquiry. As I left the foot of the staircase to re-place myself at table, lest the old woman should return; my foot struck against an iron ring fastened in the floor; I pulled it, and lifted with ease a trap-door which I should have let down, perhaps with some noise, had not the sound of voices talking in whispers, induced me to listen: I fancied that I was not unaccustomed to the sound of some of the voices. "Why didst thou trouble us with such a guest," asked one of those who were in conversation with the old dame; "we have no pleasure in shedding blood, but for gain; and none is to be expected from the death of this pilgrim;" "thou canst not be certain of that," answered the crone, "Pilgrims oft carry things of value under their weeds; besides, as chance led
"him

“ him to our habitation, and methinks, re-
“ marked me and this place, with a suspicious
“ scrutinizing look, I deemed it more prudent
“ to ask him to enter, and repose here, than bear
“ hence his suspicions perhaps to excite those
“ of others; dead men tell no tales, my son,
“ remember that!”—“ Thou sayest true, mo-
“ ther,” said another voice in a louder tone,
which increased still more my surprise and
horror, “ and this Pilgrim, whom thou sayest
“ seems oppressed as much with sorrow as fa-
“ tigue, shall here find cessation, at least to his
“ earthly pilgrimage; with respect to his fu-
“ ture journey towards heaven, (if any such
“ place there be) let him explore his way thi-
“ ther, as his knowledge of celestial geogra-
“ phy may direct him:—but hasten him to
“ the vaulted chamber; we have tasted no-
“ thing since morning, and want to refresh;
“ and we must meet the rest of the band e’er
“ the moon rises: return then to thy guest,
“ while we feed our horses; and as thou sayest
“ this stranger seems of a suspicious turn, ’twas
“ well that on returning hither, we entered
“ through the thicket.” Here the voices ceased,
and I heard the footsteps of those men going
off to a distance; while by the cough of the
old woman, which echoed through the vaults
beneath, I found she approached me; I softly
let down the trap-door, and returned to the
table; took a draught from the flaggon, and
began to cut some meat, though indeed with
little

little inclination to eat. In a few minutes, the old dame returned, and seeing me rise from the table at her entrance, she told me, that "my bed was ready, and desired me to follow her." It was now almost dark, for the high-arched windows at each end of the gallery, admitted little light; the old woman lit a lamp, and bade me follow to my chamber; we ascended the stairs, and she conducted me to a room at the left hand of the gallery, on the further side from the entrance into the hall beneath. A small pallet-bed was spread; wishing me repose, she retired; whilst, to remove in some degree her suspicions, I followed with the lamp, which I entreated she "would take back with her, as I needed it not, intending when I had performed my usual devotions, to retire immediately to rest." This I said to prevent her fastening my door on the outside, and I held it a-jar until I saw her at the bottom of the stairs:—I listened some time before I heard any voices in the hall; then I walking softly along the gallery, looked through the lattice-work, and saw three men at the table I had left; but what was my surprise when I discovered that one of them, whose face was turned towards me, was one of the chamberlains of *Edmund Ironsides*, who, on the death of that Prince, had disappeared, and were supposed to be his murderers. I forgot my own perilous situation to listen to the discourse of those miscreants, who after many boasts of the

numbers

numbers they had slain, one of the Englishmen said, addressing a Norman who was the third of this horrid assembly ;—" but would you believe, brother, that the most notable murder we committed, was that which secured a great kingdom to *Canute* the Dane ; that Prince was no sooner declared King of *England*, than he sent to the Duke of *Mercia* to demand us, with whom we remained in safety, after we had at his instigation, stabbed his brother-in-law, *Edmund Ironsides*, while we alone attended in his privy-chamber, and escaped by a postern door ; and overtaking the Duke, pretended to be messengers dispatched to inform him of the sad event ; my fellow there fortunately met the messengers of the Danish Prince ; and not being known, the man made enquiry if we still remained at the Mercian court ; by artful question, *Oswin* drew from the unwary Dane the nature of his errand, and found that *Canute*, to clear his own fame perhaps, had determined to put us to death. *Oswin* took this messenger to his house, and having intoxicated him, then came in search of me, and briefly apprizing me of my danger, we instantly determined on securing whatever valuables we possessed, and fled without confiding in the faith of the Mercian Duke, who had so recently broken it in respect to the deceased *Edmund*. We left the town late in the evening

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“ing, and having travelled all night, found
“ourselves at day-break near the sea, we took
“our passage in a vessel bound for *Aquitaine*,
“where, soon after our arrival, we fell into the
“hands of your band; you know how we
“became two of them, and what has befallen
“since, and that having dipped our hands in
“blood, and in the blood of our Prince too;
“we are equal to the most ferocious amongst
“you; but see, our dame is asleep, let us fi-
“nish our repast, and let down yon Pilgrim
“with his couch, into the well, where a spee-
“dy end will be put to all his woes on earth,
“without much pain to himself, or trouble to
“us.” These dreadful words roused me, and

I found that I had not a moment to lose; I went softly back to the chamber, and, as well as the light of the rising moon would admit, examined it. On lifting up the pallet-bed, I found that it concealed a sort of trap-door, so contrived by hooks fastened beneath, that on loosening them, the part of the floor which they supported, sunk with whatever lay on it, into a deep and loathsome cavern underneath; but how was my horror encreased, when having laid down the bed to try if I might not escape from the window, I heard the hooks suddenly loosened, and beheld the bed on which I had lain but a few moments before, precipitated into the cavern, and instantly after, the door thrown up with a violent noise, and again hooked as before! Astonishment
and

and terror held me for some time fixed to the spot on which I stood when this terrifying scene took place ; at length recovering myself, I approached the casement, but found it secured by strong bars of iron ; while I remained, not knowing how to act, I heard voices under the window, and looking out, perceived the three banditti take horse, and ride on toward the wood ; when I could no longer hear the sound of their horses feet ; I armed myself with a dagger, which I had picked up in the gallery, and going softly down the stairs, found the old woman still asleep in a great chair ; I took the leathern girdle with which my Palmers weeds were girt about me, and seizing her arms, tied them behind her ; when she found herself bound, and alone with me, she uttered loud shrieks, but I threatened her with instant death if she made any noise, and desired her to acquaint me in what way it was intended to take away my life : “ In the way,” answered she trembling, “ that the lives of
“ many have been taken ; the bed you were to
“ have reposed on (and which I marvel to see
“ you rise from) lies on a part of the floor
“ which is only supported by hooks, which
“ being loosened, the floor sinks to the dun-
“ geon beneath, at the bottom of which is a
“ deep pit filled with water, and from whence
“ whoever has been let down, never arose
“ with life ; the banditti take up the bodies
“ with long hooks, and having rifled, bury

“ them in an adjoining cell ;—it is left to me
“ to dry, replace, and make ready the bed for
“ a new comer ; but I marvel how thou hast
“ escaped ! ” — “ Nor shall I,” hastily inter-
rupting her, “ consume the precious moments
“ in informing thee ; it is now your business
“ instantly to direct me to the most speedy
“ means of escaping from this horrible den ;—
“ but mark my words ! if thou attemptest to
“ linger, or lead me astray, this dagger shall
“ terminate thy iniquitous life ! ” — She then
directed me to a path which was on the outside
of that deep and tangled forest, and which,
she said, “ would lead me to the open coun-
try.” “ I left her bound in the hall, and de-
parted, not without apprehensions of encoun-
tering the banditti, before I got clear of the
forest.”

“ As my way lay not through the perplexed
paths of this gloomy and hideous wood,
whose waving shades cast a horror over the
passenger, and seems to portend danger in-
stead of affording shelter ; I hoped e'er morn-
ing to leave it far behind ; but new disasters
awaited me : a deep darkness now veiled the
sky, and double night clad in black mists,
reigned around ; I knew not whether to ad-
vance, or repose at the foot of a tree till morn-
ing ; yet to remain so near the place I had so
happily escaped from, was perilous, as I had
walked little more than two hours ; yet if I at-
tempted to move, I might get entangled in the
blind

blind mazes of this dreary wood; I recommended myself to heaven, and determined to wait there till the dawn, which at length began to appear; I arose as soon as there was sufficient light for me to see my way, and walking with all the speed I could make, about three hours after sunrise, found myself on the borders of the plains that lie behind these hills; I continued to advance till I had left the forest at a considerable distance; at length tired, and no longer apprehensive of meeting the banditti, I threw myself on the ground, determined to rest there till the arrival of some passenger who might direct me to a habitation; I was roused from a slumber I was falling into, by the noise of horses which soon approached. Judge of my surprise when I discovered two of the little troop that swiftly passed me, to be the Princes *Alfred* and *Edward*; surprise kept me mute until they had passed; I arose to follow them, but they rode so swiftly that I soon lost sight of them; it was at this time that, directed by Providence, I found with you a solace and a refuge."

Here the son of *Ethelred* ceased; and the Hermit who had listened with attention and pity, endeavoured to console and encourage him; "my son," he said, "forfeit not by repining and doubt, the protection of the SUPREME BEING, whose interposition has been so evidently displayed on thy behalf in the most imminent perils;—consider thy
"past

“ past trials and disappointments as tests of thy
“ resignation to, and confidence in, the
“ DIVINE WILL;—regard them as assurances
“ of earthly happiness and prosperity, yet re-
“ served for thee; or as preparations for a state
“ of eternal felicity; for, as gold is tried and
“ refined by the most intense heat, so is the hu-
“ man soul purified and elevated by the ordeal
“ of calamity;—’tis then only that the Divine
“ Principle within us, assimilates and aspires
“ to HIM from Whom it is derived:—conti-
“ nue then to hope; confide in Providence.
“ Dost thou forget the words of *Edgar*, when
“ thou wert first presented to him:”—“ Thou
art peculiarly called on,” said the King, “ to
regulate with vigilant and unremitting care,
thy actions; lest that RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE
which sooner or later rigidly exacts the for-
feit of human offences; and inevitably visits
on the actors or on their race, the commissi-
on of crimes; should render thee, EDWY,
the object of atonement for the guilt of thy
progenitors, the unconscious and innocent,
but necessary victim, on whom should be
visited the dire denunciation!” “ these words,
my dear EDWY, should remain indeliably im-
pressed on thy remembrance; yet thou mayest
derive comfort from the reflection that the jus-
tice of heaven, though eventually certain,
may remain suspended; nor in thy person vi-
sit the crime of the parent on the descendant.
Should the English Princes acknowledge
and

and receive thee, and an opportunity to offer the assistance of thy arm to re-establish them on the throne of their ancestors, delay not to give all the aid in thy power; but should they give thee a cold and ungenerous reception, return to *Ademar*, in his abode, an asylum where safe from want or danger, thou mayest pass thy days, and learn to practise that resignation which alone can confer or secure lasting tranquillity of mind. Finally, my dear EDWY, attend to an aphorism which the experience of my life has verified:—“*That, while we are free from the pressing ills of the present moment, 'tis not worth repining at past sorrows or losses, and still more absurd, by fancy, or the dread of future contingencies, to create ideal terrors, or anticipate evils which may never arrive.*”

The Hermit ceased, and invited EDWY to descend with him to the sea-shore, and visit the cottages of the fishermen, who crouded around the good father; some earnestly soliciting his advice, others anxiously beseeching his benediction; pressing him to accept ('twas all they had to offer) of the best of their fish; and carried some which had been just taken, to the cell, whither, as the shades of evening now began to descend, they returned; and crowned their little excursion with chearful and temperate refreshment.